Syrian Influences in the Roman Empire to AD 300

John D. Grainger



Syrian Influences in the Roman Empire to AD 300

The study of Syria as a Roman province has been neglected by comparison with equivalent geographical regions such as Italy, Egypt, Greece, and even Gaul. It was, however, one of the economic powerhouses of the empire from its annexation until after the empire's dissolution. As such it clearly deserves some particular consideration, but at the same time it was a major contributor to the military strength of the empire, notably in the form of the recruitment of auxiliary regiments, several dozens of which were formed from Syrians. Many pagan gods, such as Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Heliopolitanus, *Dea Syra*, and also Judaism, originated in Syria and reached the far bounds of the empire. This book is a consideration, based on original sources, of the means by which Syrians, whose country was only annexed to the empire in 64 BC, saw their influence penetrate into all levels of society from private soldiers and ordinary citizens to priests and to imperial families.

John D. Grainger is an independent scholar working in both ancient and modern history. He is the author of several books including *Nerva and the Roman Succession Crisis of AD 96–99*, *Great Power Diplomacy in the Hellenistic World*, a biography of Seleukos Nikator, and a three-volume history of the Seleukid Empire.


Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Syrian Influences in the Roman Empire to AD 300

John D. Grainger



LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Grainger, John D., 1939– author.
Title: Syrian influences in the Roman empire to AD 300 / John D. Grainger.
Description: Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017013025| ISBN 9781138071230 (hardback : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781315114774 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Syria—History—To 333 B.C. | Rome—History—Empire, 30 B.C.–476 A.D. | Rome—History, Military—30 B.C.–476 A.D. | Rome—Army—History. | Syria—Religion—History. | Rome—Religion—History.
Classification: LCC DS96 .G74 2017 | DDC 939.4/305—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017013025

ISBN: 978-1-138-07123-0 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-11477-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Contents

Map, Figure, and Tables

Map

Figure

Tables

Abbreviations

AAAS	*Annales archeologiques arabes syriennes.*
AAASH	*Acta Archaeologica Academicae Scientiae Hungaricae.*
AE	*L'Annee Epigraphique.*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt.*
BAR	British Archaeological Reports.
Barbieri	Guido Barbieri, *L'Ordo Senatorio da Septimio Severo a Carino, 193–285*, Rome 1952.
BGU	Ulrich Wilcken et al., *Agyptische Urkunden aus den Koniglichen Museen zu Berlin: Griechische Urkunden*, Berlin 1903.
BRGK	*Bericht der Romisch-Germanischen Kommission der deutschen archaologischen Instituts.*
CCID	*Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni.*
Cheesman, Auxilia	G. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Army*, Oxford 1914.
CHJ	*Cambridge History of Judaism.*
ChLA	*Chartes Latinae Antquiores.*
CIJ	*Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicum.*
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionarum Latinarum.*
C. Pap. Lat.	*Corpus Papyrorum Latinarum.*
DHA	*Dialogues d'Histoire Anciennes.*
Dura	C. Bradford Welles et al., *The Excavations at Dura-Europus, Final Report: The Parchments and Papyri*, 1959.
Fasti Sacerdotum	J. Rupke, *Fasti Sacerdotium, a Prosopography of Pagan, Jewish, and Christian Religious Officials in the City of Rome, 300* BC *to* AD *499*, trans. David M. B. Richardson, Oxford 2008.
HA	*Historia Augusta.*
Halfmann, *Senatoren*	H. Halfmann, *Die Senatoren aus dem ostlichen Teil des Imperium Romanum bis zum Ende des 2Jh. n. Chr.*, Gottingen 1979.
Holder, *Auxilia*	Paul A. Holder, *The Auxilia from Augustus to Trajan*, BAR S 70, 1980.
I.Byzantion	*Die Inschriften der Byzantion.*
I.Ephesos	*Die Inschriften von Ephesos.*
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae.*
IGLS	*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie.*

IGRR	*Inscriptiones graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes.*
I.Iasos	*Die Inschriften von Iasos.*
I.Kibyra	*Dir Insckhriften von Kibyra.*
ILAf	*Inscriptions Latines d'Afrique.*
ILAlg	*Inscriptions Latines d'Algerie.*
ILM	*Inscriptions Latines de Maroc.*
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.*
ILYug	*Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia.*
Intercisa	J. Fitz, *Les Syriens a Intercisa*, Brussels 1972.
I.Philae	*Les Inscriptions grecques de Philae.*
I.Prusa	*Die Inschriften von Prusa.*
IRT	*The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania.*
I.Smyrna	*Die Inscriften von Smyrna.*
I.Stratonikeia	*Die Inschriften von Srratonikeia.*
I.Syringes	*Inscriptions grecques et latines des tombeaux des rois ou syringes a Thebes.*
JIWE	*Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe.*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies.*
Josephus *AJ*	Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*; *BJ – Bellum Judaicae.*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies.*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies.*
Merlat	P. Merlat, *Repertoire des inscriptions et monuments figures du culte de Jupiter Dolichenus*, Paris 1951.
Moretti	L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni Storiche Ellenistiche.*
Not. Dig.	*Notitia Dignitatum.*
P. Brooklyn	*Brooklyn Museum Papyri.*
PIR	*Prosopographia Imperii Romani.*
Pliny, *NH*	Pliny the Elder, *Natural History.*
PLRE	*The Prospography of the Later Roman Empire.*
P. Mich.	*Papyri in the University of Michigan.*
P. Oxy	*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri.*
P. Ross	*Papyri russi georgidcher.*
RAC	*Reallexikon fur Antike und Christentum.*
RIB	*Roman Inscriptions of Britain.*
RIU	*Romische Inschriften Ungarns.*
RMD	*Roman Military Diplomas.*
SB	*Sammelbuch griechischer Utrkunden.*
SEG	*Supplementum epigraphicum graecum.*
Spaul, *Ala*	J.E.H. Spaul *Ala*, *The Auxiliary Cavalry Units of the pre-Diocletianic Imperial Roman Army*, 1994.
Spaul, Cohors	J.E.H. Spaul, *COHORS(2), The Evidence for a Short History of the Auxiliary Infantry Units of the Imperial Roman Army*, BAR S 841, 2000.
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association.*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik.*

Introduction

Syria became a Roman province by the acts and decisions of Cn. Pompeius Magnus in 64 BC. Over the next century and a half, the original province became enlarged in size, its borders were expanded, and it was changed in its composition as it absorbed a variety of cities and kingdoms. By AD 106, when Nabataea, the last of the client kingdoms, was formally annexed, it had proved to be administratively necessary to organise the region into three separate provinces: Judaea (Palestine), Arabia (east of the Jordan Valley, mainly the former Nabataean kingdom), and Syria (from Damascus north to the Taurus Mountains). Yet this triple-land was essentially a single unit, geographically and socially, just as Gallia and Hispania were clearly distinct and single geographical units, even though always divided into separate provinces – three again in each case.

Syria was one of the great sources of wealth in the Roman Empire, and was a prime source of soldiers, goods, gods, and merchants. This was also the case elsewhere, of course, but the concentration of all these elements in one area was unique. It is the object of this book to look at these matters, at the influences of Syrians in and on the empire, because the projection of Syrian soldiers and their gods and their practices throughout the Roman Empire had a profound effect on it. The whole process could, in effect, be considered one of internal colonisation by Syrians of the Roman Empire, except that it was less a movement of individuals and more one of influences, though it also involved the physical removal from Syria of large numbers of young Syrian men who were posted to all parts of the empire as defending soldiers. This idea of Syrian 'expansion' is, perhaps, not a concept with which most students of the ancient world may be familiar. So the aim of this study is to examine the participation of Syria and Syrians in the Roman Empire, and the influence this had on that empire.

As a geographical region Syria was comparable with Italy, Spain, Gaul, or Asia Minor in importance, though in size it was smaller than any of these. And yet its influence on the life of the empire was out of all proportion compared with these and was infinitely greater than any of them. Italy was, of course, the source of the manpower and the commanders who had created the Republican empire and had conquered the Mediterranean basin. But from the first century AD onwards the power of Italy's influence steadily declined. After AD 98 the emperors came from Spain and Gaul and Africa for the next century and more – and then for a

short time from Syria – and the imperial administrators were increasingly likely to come from a land other than Italy. Spain and Gaul contributed in the form of taxes, slaves and soldiers, as did Anatolia. Greece had faded in influence – apart from its history and its language and culture, of course. Egypt was never more than the source of imperial taxes, with some religious influence here and there.

Syria, however, was a greater source of wealth in terms of commerce than many other provinces; it was a major producer of wine and olive oil, although, since it does not seem to have exported these goods seriously to Italy, this has not been widely noted; it was a source of military manpower as much as either Gaul or Spain; and it produced more gods than any other place. Egypt sent Isis, Osiris, and Serapis into the empire, just as Greece sent Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, and others; but Syria sent into the empire the gods of Jerusalem and Arabia and Phoenicia, Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Dushares of Arabia, Adonis of Phoenicia, and Yahweh, and Atargatis, and still more. These spread throughout the empire and eventually changed it profoundly. In the end one of these gods, the much-altered Yahweh of Jerusalem, captured the whole empire in the name of Christ.

The object here, therefore, is to track these various influences and effects as part of a consideration of the participation of Syria and Syrians in the life of the empire, and of its limitations. We may begin at the top of society, with the infiltration of Syrians into the administration of the empire, and eventually to its very head as the emperors of the Severan dynasty (Chapter 2). Syria was the major military base in the eastern empire, and had a role in all the wars conducted by Rome against enemies in the eastern regions – Syrians, Armenians, Parthians, and other Romans (Chapter 4). The soldiers recruited into the army (and the fleet) were one of the foundations of that rise and can be estimated and located relatively easily, and the recruitment and spread of these Syrian soldiers can be followed throughout the empire, from southern Egypt to Scotland (Chapter 5). The merchants of the great Syrian cities created and channelled wealth into the empire and into the cities, though precision in detailing their activities is difficult because they were not so addicted to recording their presence as others (Chapter 7). The gods of Syria spread their messages out of the cities and villages to the empire's farthest boundaries: Syrian gods were worshipped on the extreme northern borders of the empire (just as Syrian soldiers formed garrisons there), on the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus in far Britannia (Chapter 6). This part is, like the soldiers, and in part because they were often linked, relatively straightforward.

This survey can be conducted in two ways, topical and geographical, and, to see their proper effects, both will be employed. Each individual element – soldiers, emperors, the country as military base, the soldiers, its gods, and so on – will be examined in relation to the empire as a whole; then each region of the empire will be examined, more briefly, to discover the exact extent and profundity and permanence of that Syrian influence upon it. The central aim is to estimate the full effect of Syrian participation throughout the rest of the empire. The Roman poet Juvenal objected to the presence of Syrians in the

city of Rome, claiming that the Orontes was emptying into the Tiber; it is a scathing comment, and his accuracy is questionable, but he was not wrong to see that Syria and Syrians were having a powerful effect.[1] Just how powerful this was, however, is more difficult to estimate, and a mere complaint by an irascible Roman is not sufficient.

The timeframe for all this will be from (and in some cases before) the incorporation of Syria and its various appendages into the empire between 64 BC and AD 106, until about AD 300. This latter limit is necessary because shortly after that date all these matters and effects were swamped by the overwhelming victory of Christianity – a Syrian religion, note – and the historical questions to be asked change utterly.

Note

1 Juvenal, *Satire* 3, 61–80, though he refers to his targets as 'Greek'.

1 Roman Syria

The Syrian scene

The land

It is necessary to begin with Syria itself. This is a remarkable land, much divided by mountains and rivers and steep valleys, but with a long history going back to the initial invention of farming after the Ice Age, and a language which has changed slowly through the centuries, but was always understood throughout the whole land – the development from the earliest written material to modern Arabic is continuous, and the language probably originated among the earliest settled inhabitants at the end of the Ice Age.[1] Living in a country which was frequently politically divided and often conquered, Syrians were resilient and tough, and much attached to their land, their language, and their gods. The Roman period in its history was relatively short and to a large extent on balance it was benign in its effects, but the Syrians largely disdained full participation in the empire's life; they exported rather more, socially and economically, than they imported.

In the Roman period and before, then, Syria was the land which was bounded by the Mediterranean coast on the west, the Sinai Desert on the south, and the Amanus and Taurus Mountains on the north; to the east the boundary was the Euphrates River and the edge of the deserts of Syria and Arabia; in the northeast beyond the Euphrates the plains and hills of Mesopotamia between that river and the Tigris – called in Arabic 'al-Jazirah', 'the island' – provided a wide passageway from east to west – or, in Roman terms, from west to east, between the northern mountains and the desert to the south. None of the frontiers was sealed or impermeable, or can even be delineated easily by a line on the map (other than the coast), but these are clear enough to be going on with.

The name 'Syria' is an abbreviation of 'Assyria', used by the Greeks of the Archaic Age when the Assyrian Empire ruled the region.[2] But Assyria could only hold on to Syria by destroying its cities and killing and deporting its people, and its successors as rulers of the region, the Babylonian and Persian Empires, were content to let the land moulder on in poverty and rural self-sufficiency. By the time Alexander the Great campaigned through Syria it had only just begun to recover from this brutal and neglectful treatment over the previous four centuries – though he had to fight repeatedly to gain control

of it, in the sieges of Tyre and Gaza in particular, and of other fights as well: armed resistance to his rule came from other inhabitants of the Lebanese hills, and at Samaria. His eventual successor as ruler of north Syria, Seleukos Nikator, for purposes of his own, sowed a multitude of cities across north Syria, while Seleukos' contemporary and enemy, Ptolemy, controlled the south, the Phoenician and Palestinian areas; as a result of their mutual hostility, and of that between their successors, the region became well-fortified with new cities. The two dynasties repeatedly fought each other, but the land developed over the next couple of centuries as an urbanised region, in a process of wealth creation and repopulation which was unprecedented for the time and made Syria one of the major prizes in the Roman progress of conquest around the Mediterranean basin and beyond.[3]

The land the Romans acquired

Syria, by the time the Romans took control of it, was therefore a rich land, teeming with cities; its people were exceptionally enterprising in commerce, and were inventive in other ways. This had been the case for millennia, especially when they were left alone in independence. It was the land where agriculture was invented, where writing in an alphabetic script was developed, and it had long been fertile in religions and gods. It was inventive in arts and crafts, and even as Pompey was marching through and disposing of kings and cities in an almost offhand way in the 60s BC, men in the city of Sidon were inventing the techniques of blown glass.[4] It was, of course, because of the wealth of the land that the Roman Republic had finally seized it; the delay in doing so was because it was politically no threat, being much subdivided.

The eventual victory of the Seleukids in their war with the Ptolemies had reunited Syria under one imperial control by the Peace of Raphia in 195 BC, but the Seleukid state itself began to break up not long after. In its internal geography, Syria is all too easily divided, above all by a line of mountain ranges running from north to south, the Bargylos (now the Jebel Alawiyeh), the Lebanon, and Antilebanon Mountains lying parallel, the Judaean plateau and the plateaux across the Jordan River east of the Great Rift Valley. So when the unifying weight of the imperial administration of the Seleukid kingdom was removed late in the second century BC, as the dynasty failed, the land quickly broke into political fragments, beginning with the people of the hills, who must always have been difficult to control, and since they were relatively poor, the Seleukids had scarcely bothered to do so. This eventually produced a political situation which was a revival of the pre-Assyrian condition, one of a mixture of city states and small kingdoms. This new division took place during the century before Roman imperial control was imposed, and such was the nature of the political divisions, which largely reflected the physical situation, that imperial reunification took even longer to be revived, even under Roman imperial pressure; the Roman conquest gradually absorbed the fragments, reuniting the whole, but it took a century and a half to achieve reunity.

The process of division after about 150 BC was significant for the process of reunification. Cities, especially the old proud Phoenician cities, moved fairly smoothly into independence, while other areas formed themselves into kingdoms. When Roman power arrived at last, in 64 BC, in the person of Pompey, there were dozens of independent states scattered across Syria, some of them very small, some only single cities or even villages, though others were of a considerable size, big enough to be Roman provinces later. All of them were reduced in Pompey's campaign, either becoming part of the new Roman province or client states of the Roman Republic.[5] Many of the smallest of these states are now unknown, or scarcely so, and did not last very long, but even the largest, oldest, and most firmly established of the states succumbed in the end. Over the next century and more, all of the client kingdoms and all of the cities were gradually absorbed into the Syrian province; that province then proved to be too big to administer efficiently, and was then divided into three parts, though 'Syria' remains the most convenient term for the whole land.[6]

This 'absorption' was not as easy a process as such a term might imply. The smallest states, of course, could scarcely resist being taken over, though some still had to be forced, but the larger ones could and did put up varying degrees of resistance, usually armed. These larger states included Commagene, along the Euphrates River in the north, Emesa in the centre, along the Orontes River, Ituraea in the southern Bekaa Valley, Judaea in Palestine, and Nabataea on the borders of Arabia east of the Jordan River. All of these made some resistance to Roman conquest, and Judaea broke out into repeated rebellions even after being absorbed into the province. It is quite possible that some of the smaller states also mounted a serious resistance.

Pompey in 64 BC apprehended and executed more than one city-tyrant, though it is true that most of the cities (as opposed to the client kingdoms) welcomed the protection which the Roman presence provided. On the other hand, many countries continued, like Judaea, to hanker after the complete independence which some had achieved in the decades before Pompey's arrival, and emphasised this individuality whenever they could, for example in their coinages and their languages, and the gods they worshipped. The loyalty to Rome of Syria and the Syrians could never be taken for granted for a long time.[7] This resistance to Rome was a continuation of the resistance these lands had made to the later Seleukid kings, and even to that faced by Alexander. The cities and regions which broke away into independence were mainly those where the population was 'Syrian' rather than 'Greek' – that is mainly Aramaic-speaking.[8] But independence was evidently a condition wished for by all groups in Syria, even if it was necessarily regarded as unachievable for long periods; the overwhelming power of Rome prevented that longed-for condition being realised.

The Roman province

Syria was one of the last provinces added to the Roman Republic's empire. The original province was collected by Cn. Pompeius Magnus in the 60s BC as the brief and gimcrack empire of Tigranes V of Armenia fell apart at the first touch

of a Roman army.[9] By this time the old Seleukid kingdom of which Syria had been a part for almost three centuries was no more, though a couple of Seleukid princes still contended for the rule of parts of north Syria. Had there been only one of these princes he might have briefly succeeded in gaining a kingdom, but the fact that the two fought each other and were sponsored by neighbouring and voracious Arab kings condemned them in Pompey's estimation as worthless.[10] In fact, it seems unlikely that if one of these princes really had established himself he might have been permitted to continue as king for some time, but the Seleukids had too much historical baggage to easily submit to be part of someone else's empire, and they would surely have opposed Roman control.

What happened to the two squabbling princes after being rejected by Pompey is not recorded, but there were undoubtedly other members of the family still extant. One man, Seleukos, was briefly married to Berenike IV of the Ptolemaic dynasty simply because he was of sufficient social rank to satisfy her quest for a suitable husband; but she did not like his body odour, so she said, and she had him murdered after a few days of marriage.[11] Some of the dynasties of the client kingdoms, such as that of Kommagene, had Seleukids in their ancestry, and later descent from the Seleukid family was sometimes claimed. That is, there were plenty of Seleukids available if Pompey had been in the mood to restore the kings. He evidently rejected them all, partly because his political enemy Lucullus had fostered a Seleukid restoration.

Pompey's first sweep through Syria, from north to south, produced the annexation to Rome of a large part of north Syria, centred on the four great cities of Antioch, Seleukeia-in-Pieria, Apameia, and Laodikeia-ad-Mare, together with several of the smaller cities to the east between Antioch and the Euphrates. South of Laodikeia he took over the cities of the Phoenician coast, and in Palestine, he broke up the Jewish kingdom, reducing it to its original rural highland core, thereby seizing for the new province the coastal Palestinian plain and several inland areas.[12]

This gave Rome control of the whole of the Mediterranean coast between Cilicia in the north and Egypt, with the revenues to be collected from the wealthy cities, and by way of customs duties at the ports. Those areas which were not directly annexed were organised as a series of relatively small, weak cities, principalities, and kingdoms. The highland areas in the Taurus and Amanus Mountains, the Bargylos Hills inland of Laodikeia, the Lebanon and Antilebanon Mountains (and the Palestinian hills), were left therefore to their native rulers. Some of these petty kingdoms were suppressed – a growing tyranny in northern Phoenicia was taken over, and its tyrant executed, for example.[13] The monarchies were generally mulcted of substantial quantities of money – the Ituraean ruler Ptolemy, son of Menneas, was assessed at 1000 talents[14] – which was used largely to pay Pompey's military expenses, the conquest thus being made to pay for itself, in the usual Roman way.

This mixture of Roman province and numerous local monarchies persisted from 64 BC, when Pompey left the land, until AD 106, when the last of the monarchies, the Nabataean kingdom, was acquired in a swift campaign by the Emperor Trajan's forces; even after a century and a half's familiarity with Rome,

the Nabataeans still fought to retain their independence and their monarchy.[15] The process of the annexation of other kingdoms had been just as awkward. To begin with, during the thirty years after Pompey, the land was involved in conflicts, notably in the civil wars between 49 and 30 BC which destroyed the Roman Republic and brought in the imperial system. This process, for Syria, included invasions by the Parthians, ferocious taxation by Roman commanders, forced conscription of thousands of men into the army, rebellions (as the Romans saw them) by more than one of the local monarchies, and briefly the cherry-picking of rich morsels by Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, though she could only do this by permission of Mark Antony, who was quite content to see her continuously feuding with the Judaean King Herod, who in turn succeeded in rebuilding a large Jewish kingdom.[16]

Several of the minor monarchies vanished in these years, and others continued to disappear afterwards as they were absorbed into the province. Judging by the known cases, these annexations could be at a Roman whim, or after a rebellion, or when a king died, with or without an heir or a successor. The smaller kingdoms are very poorly recorded, but the larger states' fates can be discerned.[17] There was, for a time at least, no consistent process of annexation. The Emesan kingdom, for example, was annexed in 31 BC, when its king took the losing side in the war between Antony and Octavian, but it was reinstated ten years later under the rule of the current senior representative of the royal family; it was eventually finally suppressed in AD 72.[18] Similarly, the Commagenean kingdom, in the north, was suppressed in AD 17, reinstated in 38, and finally suppressed at about the same time as Emesa. During all this Commagene was also deprived of two of the cities it had gained control of in the confusion of the collapse of the Armenian kingdom. One was Seleukeia-Zeugma, at the crossing point of the Euphrates; this was not a place the Romans could possibly leave under local control, with the Parthian kingdom looming in the east – this was where the invasion of 40–37 had reached Syria; the other city was Doliche, a place which will feature prominently later in this study.[19] In Palestine the Jewish kingdom was reduced to its rural upland heartland by Pompey, but then was allowed to expand by Antony and by Augustus under the rule of the archetypal Roman loyalist client king, Herod 'the Great'; after his death it was juggled between annexation and a series of Jewish kings of Herod's family until it exploded in the great rebellion of AD 66–73; after that it was finally annexed, largely ruined of course.[20] The final annexation of the Nabataean kingdom came in 106 as part of the mopping up of outstanding problems in the area by Trajan in preparation for his great Parthian War. The gradual nature of this process of absorption is important here for a variety of reasons, as will appear later in this study.

The fragmentation of Syria had come about as the Seleukid kingdom broke down in the late second century BC, but in larger historical perspective this was only a new version of a repeated pattern in the long history of Syria, in which the country was alternately divided into local states, generally weak (like those the Romans took over), and subjected to more or less brutal conquests by foreign invaders. (This is a pattern which continues in Syria to this

day – quite apart from the current (2011–2017) division of the Syrian republic, the region includes the territories of four sovereign states, two occupied territories – the Palestinian 'West Bank' and Gaza – and lands ruled by three other non-Syrian states.)

From the Assyrian conquest of the Syrian kingdoms in the eighth century BC, foreign rule had been the norm, as the land went with whoever was the dominant regional power in the Near East – the Assyrians gave way to the Babylonians, who were taken by the Persians, who fell to Alexander the Great, whose successors Seleukos and Ptolemy divided the land between them. But these Macedonians were much more solicitous of their kingdoms than their imperial predecessors, partly because they were rivals for control of all Syria. The province which had remained largely ruined from the time of the Assyrian conquest revived steadily under these Macedonian kings. Seleukos I in particular encouraged the growth of urban centres, by founding ten cities in the north himself, by adjusting several local towns into Greek-style cities and encouraging them to grow, and by permitting other places to grow;[21] Ptolemy was less keen on founding new cities, but he developed Ake, the old Persian centre as a Greek city – Ptolemais-Ake – to be the administrative centre of Ptolemaic Koile Syria, and it then grew. Ptolemy II did encourage the growth of local centres and thereby wealth creation (so that he could tax it, of course), and some small cities were founded, mainly east of the Jordan, such as Philadelphia (Amman), named for Ptolemy II, and Philotera, named for his sister.[22]

In this perspective the Roman invasion and conquest, and the annexations of the Syrian kingdoms and other states, was only the latest in a long line of foreign invasions leading to the unification of the country as part of an empire. But the Roman rule, after the initial mess and violence of Pompey's invasion and the Roman civil wars, was essentially a continuation of the Seleukid system, being based, in the province, largely on self-governing cities which were protected and taxed by the Roman state, peace being thus enforced.

Syrian survival – language and gods

The extraordinary thing about this very brutal history is that under these repeated conquests, some of which were widely destructive, and in which large numbers of Syrians who survived the conquests were driven out of their home country into distant provinces, the local culture survived, even thrived in certain ways. This is marked in two particular elements. The language of the people remained Aramaic throughout the eight centuries of foreign rule and on into the Roman period. In fact, the language set out on a career of conquest of its own, since one of the brutalities of the conquerors, particularly the Assyrians, had been to shift whole communities about their empire, with the result that Aramaic-speakers were spread from Syria as far east as Arachosia (the modern Afghanistan). It even became an official language of the Persian Empire because it was so widespread.[23] Its success is partly due to this widening use provided by the conquerors, but also because it was an alphabetic script, so much easier to

write and read than other scripts, cuneiform or hieroglyphic, which had been in use earlier. Once they understood it, Indians took up the idea, just as, at the other end of the reach of Syria, and several centuries earlier, the Greeks had done. Both sensibly adapted the alphabet to their own languages.[24]

The other mode of cultural and community survival in Syria was through religion. The various Syrian communities each worshipped their own god or goddess, but when examined closely most of them appear to be manifestations of the same basic deities, a storm or sky god and his wife/queen, plus their 'children'. When the Greeks arrived they recognised these deities as manifestations of their own gods, and quickly identified the sky god Hadad, for example, with Zeus, and his wife with Hera; the Romans followed on, identifying Hadad with Jupiter.

But in Syria the several Aramaic-speaking communities each had their own particular versions of these deities, and some adopted the worship of the deities' imagined children, or separated off some of the attributes of the deities into a personification as another god or goddess. The sky god was Hadad in Damascus, but nearby in the Bekaa Valley (between the two Lebanese mountain ranges) he was just the local baal, an indefinite god-name;[25] at Bambyke in the north Hadad was subordinate to his queen, Atargatis. And so on. These gods and goddesses were in fact worshipped all through Syria, so that, like Hadad, Atargatis appears in the south as well as in the north; Baal Shamin is another common and widespread name; Dushares, often identified with the Nabataeans, was also worshipped in the north. That is, all these were universal Syrian deities.

The Jewish Yahweh was, of course, another manifestation of the sky god, the local god of Jerusalem in the same way as Hadad was the local god in Damascus. Judaea was the most spectacular case of loyalty to a local god being preferred over that to the benevolent Seleukid kingdom. A dispute over the position of the high priest in Jerusalem in the 170s BC escalated to a rebellion against the kingdom which, after much fighting, eventually brought Judaea to a condition of independence from 129 BC. The crucial moment of this process was when the second of the insurgent leaders, Jonathan Maccabee, was appointed high priest by the Seleukid usurper King Alexander I Balas (the post had been empty for several years).[26] This hereditary position became the base from which the whole family, the Maccabees or Hasmoneans, ascended to kingship several decades later. While it is difficult to document the influence of this rebellious success elsewhere in Syria, it is not difficult to imagine that other communities, each with their own loyalties to their particular gods, could find inspiration in the Jewish success.[27]

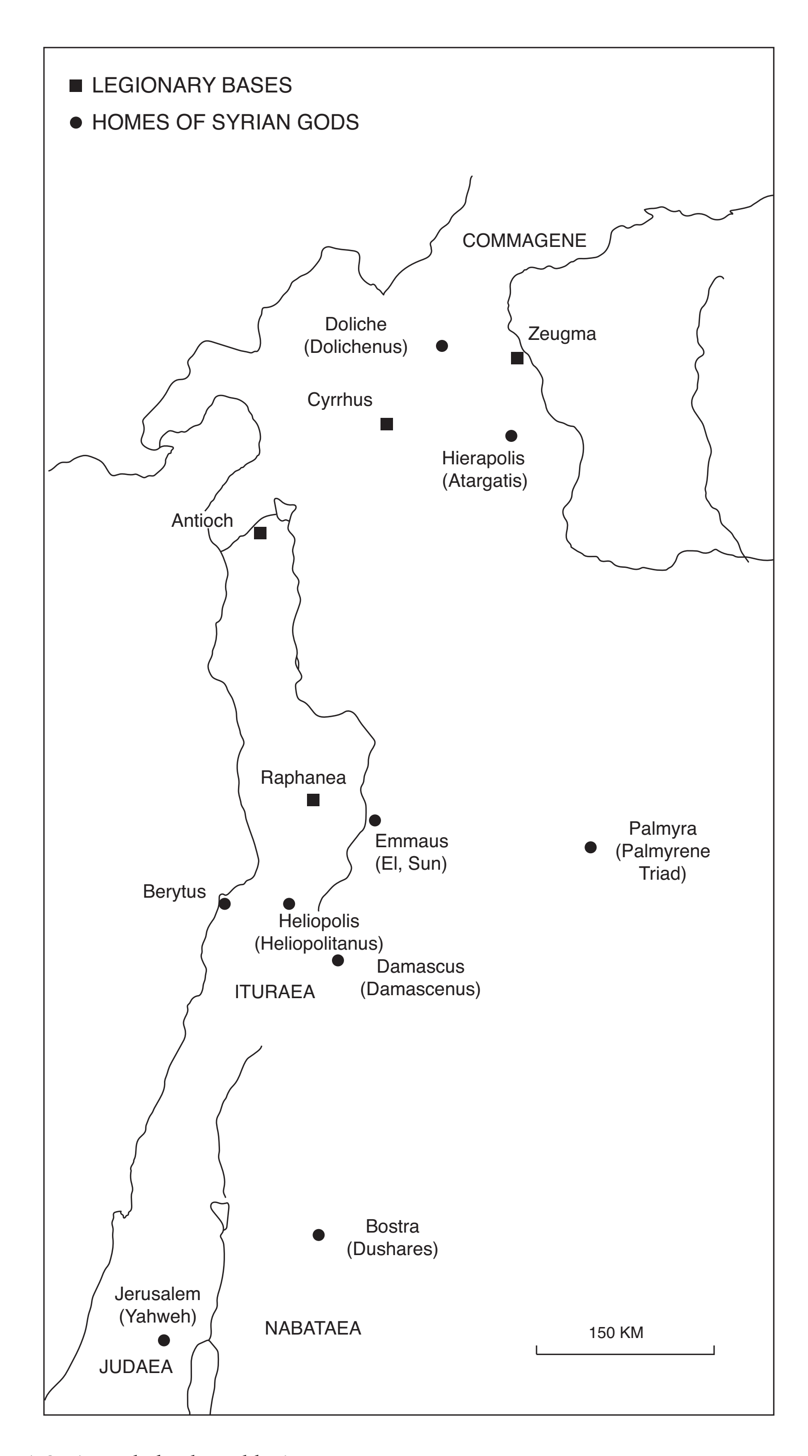
The case of the Jewish loyalty to Yahweh is well documented, as is the emergence of the high priest as king, and there are other examples of this process in other places in Syria. The institution of the ruling high priest had already been encountered by Alexander the Great during his conquest of Syria. The high priest of the temple of Atargatis at Bambyke in north Syria, who had the name or title of Abd-Hadad, and acted as the 'husband' of the goddess there, proclaimed himself king when the Persian authority in Syria evaporated after Alexander's

victory at Issos in 333. Abd-Hadad enjoyed a year or so of power with this title, and issued the coins which demonstrated his claims,[28] while Alexander fought his way south at Tyre and Gaza and into Egypt, but he seems to have been suppressed when Alexander returned to north Syria and passed Bambyke on his way to victory at Gaugamela. But the shrine of Atargatis remained rich and powerful locally, so much so that Seleukos Nikator, who acquired the rule in north Syria in 301, accepted the situation while ignoring the high priest's royal pretensions. Bambyke was domesticated into the Macedonian Seleukid kingdom as the city of Hierapolis ('holy city'), in effect a priestly city state within the kingdom; his wife Stratonike is credited with sponsoring the cult, and it remained popular, no doubt in part because it represented a native, and extravagantly non-Greek, deity, but also through Seleukid tolerance and favour.[29]

It is not possible to trace any connection between Abd-Hadad's pretensions in 332 BC and those of the leaders of the Jews and Ituraeans and others two centuries later, but the fact remains that all of the founders of these states began as local high priests of gods of particular Syrian localities, and aimed at, and sometimes achieved, kingship and independence. The existence of high priests at Hierapolis and Jerusalem in the 330s indicates that this was an office which had been tolerated by the Persians, and probably by their imperial predecessors.

Not far from Hierapolis/Bambyke, the old Hittite temple at the place the Greeks renamed Doliche was the active centre of the worship of the sky god, and the range of the temple's influence is demonstrated by the distribution, to a radius of about thirty miles round the place, of sculptures and inscriptions referring to the temple and its god (see Map 1).[30] Duluk (Doliche) has been under archaeological investigation recently, but there was a powerful clue recorded some years ago when a substantial Persian-period cemetery was investigated at the site; if there was a cemetery, there must have been a living community. Other religious centres which may be presumed from a variety of sources to have survived and operated from before Alexander's campaign included Tyre (the temple of Herakles-Melqart which Alexander tried to visit in 332),[31] shrines at Emesa, which was built up into a major temple of the sun god by the kings of Emesa and flourished under Roman rule, of Dagon at Ashdod, the high place at Petra, the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim beside Samaria, and others of much less prominence.

The examples of these local loyalties to shrines and temples are so numerous that it may be assumed that any and every Syrian community had, or shared in, one of these temples or shrines. They had all survived through the long centuries of foreign rule, largely no doubt because of the general superstition, shared by even the most powerful of kings, that destroying a god's shrine was liable to be counter-productive. Under the Macedonian kings, however, far from merely surviving, the new wealth and prosperity of the whole region also came to increase the wealth and influence of the shrines and temples – the Jerusalem temple was wealthy enough in c.180 to be the object of a government looting.[32] They thus increased their influence while continuing to accept and retain the loyalty of their neighbouring communities. When Pompey passed through



Map 1 Syria: gods, lands, and legions

Syria, several of the rulers he encountered were not only ruling monarchs but were local chief priests as well.

The transition from high priest to hereditary ruler is most clearly seen in Judaea, but it is also documented in at least two other territories. To the north of Judaea the Ituraean people had a central shrine-temple at Baalbek, and the post of high priest was held by the ruling family. This, at least, is the position when the Ituraean people become visible in the records. The earliest ruler was Ptolemy son of Menneas, whose period of rule was from about 85 to 40 BC, and who encountered Pompey, to his cost; he was wealthy enough to hand over 1000 talents to be left in power. His coins, and those of his two successors, name him as high priest, though he never took the title of king. That is, his post as high priest was sufficient to command the loyalty of his people. (Possibly his father, Menneas, had held the post before him, but he did not mint any coins to prove it to us; a presiding dynasty of high priests, however, does seem probable.)[33] Similarly, in that part of the Orontes Valley to the north of the Bekaa, and centred on the ancient site of Emesa (modern Homs), an Arab family had emerged as local rulers by the 90s BC. Again the founder, Samsigeramus, was high priest of the sun temple in Emesa, and that temple eventually became as famous in the Roman world as those of Baalbek or Jerusalem.[34] It is possible that the Nabataean king was also a high priest, though the early kings provide no evidence for it; but one of the royal centres was Petra, where there was (and is) a high place for worship, and this was clearly an integral part of the city (the only access to the high place is in fact by a long stairway from the city). The chief priest at Hierapolis-Bambyke must be considered in this company as well, though he did not again claim a royal title, perhaps because the temple had been absorbed into the life of the Greek city which by then enclosed it; the city, of course, would have its own government, to which the temple would be subordinate, in the Greek way.

The disintegration of Syria had also promoted other local shrines to rise to local political prominence, providing a helpful focus of loyalty for harassed populations. Each city in the Roman province had devotion to a particular god, often one of the Greek gods – Zeus or Apollo or Poseidon or others – but who was usually only the latest manifestation of an older local god dating from the pre-Assyrian period and even before. This had been the pattern under those successive empires – Assyria, Babylon, Persia, the Macedonians – in which the neglectful imperial regime was itself ignored by the Syrians in favour of their old gods, in a gesture of independent thinking by the subdued peoples, who were unable for a long time, due to depopulation and the drastic reduction in local wealth, to express their disaffection in any more concrete and effective way. Sometimes the old gods emerged under the old names – Yahweh from Judaea, Baal from the Ituraeans, El for Emesa – but in the cities under the Macedonian regimes, they were generally clothed in a Greek guise. Underneath, however, it is clear that they were essentially the same deities. They were also very largely universal Syrian deities, each of them appearing in sources throughout Syria (just as Zeus and Athene and so on were universally Greek, though one deity could be adopted by a particular city).[35] Yahweh was perhaps the exception by

the Seleukid period, having been so heavily identified with Jerusalem, though there were Jews, and therefore Yahweh, in all parts of Syria. Judaea, of course, had maintained an independent existence under the old empires for far longer than other Syrian kingdoms, and had a tradition of 'return' and re-foundation from their earlier history which the other peoples did not have. This was clearly one of the foundations for the Maccabean explosion and the later Jewish Wars.

So the old Bronze Age thunder god became Zeus or Baal or Yahweh or Hadad, and the old prime goddess emerged as Atargatis, whose main shrine was at Bambyke, but who was also worshipped throughout Syria. Sometimes both the god and the temple remained, though the latter was probably rebuilt in the Greek style and the former might be simply renamed, as Hadad of Damascus became Zeus Damaskeinos (and in the Roman period Jupiter Damascenus, and indeed whose temple became the site of the Christian cathedral, and then of the main city mosque after the Arab conquest, which it still is).[36] These therefore were the gods of the places inherited by the Greek and Macedonian settlers who immigrated to Syria in the late fourth and early third centuries BC and who renamed them as Zeus and Apollo and Herakles and so on. And, when the Romans came, Zeus became Jupiter – the Baal of the Bekaa at Baalbek became Jupiter Heliopolitanus, and Atargatis became 'the Syrian goddess', all without changing the god's nature at home, or their rites or temples. These were the gods which were to be exported throughout the Roman Empire as the immigration of Greeks and Romans went into reverse and their descendants and those of the native Syrians moved out, voluntarily or not, into other provinces.

This pattern of divine survival, and the revival of shrines and temples and their recovery in the Hellenistic period, went down to the village level. The damage done to Syria, particularly north Syria, by the Assyrian conquest – the destruction of most of the cities, and the widespread deportation of the rich and the skilled amongst the people[37] – reduced most of Syria outside Palestine and Phoenicia to an impoverished rural society. When Xenophon and the Greek army in the service of the Akhaimenid pretender Cyrus the Younger marched through north Syria in 404 BC, there were no cities, nor even any towns, in a land which two centuries later held a series of the greatest cities of the Mediterranean world.[38] At village level, however, the local gods were still worshipped, and they were the same gods which had always been worshipped. It is the record of the shrines and altars which demonstrate the Syrian-ness of the whole local pantheon.[39]

The implantation of cities in Syria by the Seleukid kings, particularly in the north of the country, had brought a large number of foreign settlers into the country, mainly from Greece, but also from Asia Minor, though the basis had been the stationing of Macedonian soldiers in garrisons by Seleukos' predecessors Alexander the Great and Antigonos I Monophthalamos, and these soldiers had imposed the many Macedonian place-names on the country. The cities had attracted to them locals from the surrounding Syrian territories by their wealth and the economic opportunities they provided, as do cities everywhere. Studies of the names of Syrians in the early Roman period suggest that the population

of north Syria by then was more or less evenly divided between Greek- and Syrian- (that is, Aramaic-) speakers, but this was only among the groups who put up inscriptions.[40] This immigration was, of course, a new version of the imperial population relocation which had been performed so much more brutally by Seleukos' predecessors, though in this case it was largely voluntary. Even under the cultural pressure of the Greek incomers, however, the Aramaic language and culture maintained itself without much difficulty, especially in the countryside, suggesting the strength of its grip on the Syrian population; no doubt this was a quite deliberate reaction of the Aramaic-speakers to the Greek 'invasion', one which was perhaps by this time almost instinctive after the successful quiet resistance to the several previous invasions and conquests the country had been subjected to.

The Roman takeover had a similar effect, but in alternative ways. The Romans had long experience in planting colonies in the territories they conquered, but in Syria only one was imposed, at Berytos in Phoenicia. This was an action by Augustus in 29 BC and 15 BC, when veterans of two of his legions were allocated lands in the area.[41] The place was chosen for its strategic position, for a community of legionaries at just that geographical point controlled the communications between north and south Syria very satisfactorily. The *colonia* at first included just Berytos itself, on the coast (in 29 BC), but it was later expanded to take in the territory of the temple city of Baalbek – which became Heliopolis – in the Bekaa Valley, which meant that two of the routes between north and south Syria, along the coast and through the valley, were under direct Roman control. (A third route lay through the desert east of the Antilebanon Mountains and was only to be used in emergencies, though a modern road has since been built.) Berytos *colonia* was capable of producing a large militia force twenty years later, and again in the Jewish War,[42] so it is apparent that the military tradition was clearly maintained, though this was also the case, as will be pointed out later, in the rest of Syria.

The Roman army

A more direct Roman influence in north Syria came with the stationing there of several legions. These were in position from the time of Pompey, but were moved about, changed around, and variously recruited, disbanded, and taken away during the civil wars; from the time of Augustus' reorganisation of the region, however, four legions were positioned on a more or less permanent basis in north Syria.[43] Their purpose was most obviously to defend Syria against any possible Parthian attack, for Parthian armies had invaded Syria during the Roman civil wars, and had reached south into Palestine, and west deep into Asia Minor.[44] The Syrian legions were thus protecting not just north Syria, where they were positioned, but by that positioning they protected Palestine and Asia Minor as well, and even Greece and Egypt. This was one reason for the Romans taking over the river-crossing city station at Seleukeia-Zeugma on the Euphrates, which later became one of the legionary camps. Others were at Doliche, Apamaea, and

Raphanaea, in all cases at communication nodes or astride important routes. (Their presence was also a matter of internal security, of course, to maintain control over the wealthy, and possibly rebellious, Syrian province.)[45]

The legions, which were often stationed for long periods in and near Syrian cities, were able to absorb local recruits like sponges. IV *Scythica* was in north Syria, stationed at the bridge city of Seleukeia-Zeugma from the mid-first to the fourth centuries AD. By the time it disappeared from the records it was probably entirely Syrian in personnel, except, though not necessarily, for the commanding officers; XII *Fulminata* was based at the rural site of Raphanaea from Augustus' reign to the Judaean revolt, then at Melitene just north of the Syrian provincial boundary; III *Gallica* was in Syria under Mark Antony, who recruited its strength by taking in Syrian recruits.[46] It was stationed at the Seleukid military city of Apamaea until it was moved to Moesia in 67, just in time to take part in the invasion of Italy on behalf of Vespasian. It had a reputation for ferocity, but it was also notable as conducting a morning sun-worshipping ceremony derived from its Syrian sojourn.[47] The god it worshipped was the sun, the god of Emesa and Heliopolis; it is possible the legion had been stationed briefly at Emesa, which was not far from Apamaea. It was returned to Syria in 70 and stayed there for the next three centuries. It was this legion which was the first to accept the claim of Elagabalus to be emperor in 218, some of its men having been entranced by the teenager's performance as high priest in the Emesa temple. If any major unit of the Roman Empire was Syrian in composition this legion was, and its glee at invading Italy, sacking Cremona, capturing Rome, and looting Capua during the civil war of 69 was notorious; this also ensured its rapid return to Syria, for while it remained in Italy it was, in public relations terms, a liability for Vespasian.[48]

Similar histories and itineraries can be traced for the other legions which were stationed for lengthy periods in Syria, such as VI *Ferrata*, X *Fretensis*, and III *Cyrenaica*, while several others were stationed in Syria for particular wars, particularly during the Judaean revolt, Corbulo's Armenian war, and Trajan's Parthian War. The longer the stay, of course, as III *Gallica* in particular shows, the more domesticated in Syria the legion became, but even in a short stay a legion was likely to recruit Syrians and then carry them off to its permanent base elsewhere. This will be investigated later.[49] (See Chapter 4, Part I.)

Auxiliary regiments were raised among all sorts of people, but in particular their recruits came from rural and mountainous areas. By deliberate policy most of these regiments were then posted to a different province. So, as early as the 20s BC, there was an Ituraean regiment serving on the southern Egyptian frontier (in distant succession to the regiment recruited in Judaea which had been stationed in the same area by the Persian Empire four centuries before).[50] Syria was to be one of the most prolific recruiting areas for the Roman army, helped by the fact that the client kingdoms had their own armies which were incorporated wholesale into Rome's forces when the kingdoms were enfolded into the Roman province. This tends to look as if it was one of the motives for annexation, since these events usually occurred at times when Rome was in need of military reinforcements – after the Jewish War for Emesa and Commagene,

and before the Parthian War for Nabataea, for example. Since that absorption process lasted for over a century and a half (64 BC to AD 106) the army gained a substantial reinforcement more or less regularly; there was also a continuous recruitment from, for example, the Ituraeans all through that period. Several city units – Tyre, Antioch, Samaria, and others – which were probably originally local city militias, became converted into professional auxiliary regiments also, particularly at the time of Corbulo's War (56–63) and the Jewish revolt (66–73). In addition, Syria was the scene of frequent fighting, against either the Jews in Palestine until AD 135, or against the Parthians across the Euphrates or the Armenians in the north. There was always pressure to recruit, always openings from militant young men, always casualties to be replaced. (For the details see Chapter 4, Part II.)

The Romans recruited men into their army in a much more systematic and deliberate manner than the Hellenistic kings had done. The kings had relied on enforcing the duty of all adult males to serve in the royal army in a crisis, for which, as in all Greek cities, the young men underwent some fairly basic military training as ephebes; they had also relied on recruiting mercenaries from the great reservoir of such men available in Greece when a major war arrived. Rome, in its imperial phase at least, had a wholly professional army, and the more valued recruits who were recruited into its existing auxiliary regiments were men from the wilder parts of the empire. In Syria this usually meant the hills and the deserts, though any fit man was accepted. This also removed such men from their native land, depriving it of possible recruits in any rebellion – for they were almost invariably stationed well away from their homeland. This is one of the most telling elements in the relations of Syria and Rome, implying strongly that the Roman imperial government was well aware of the general dislike it provoked; the Jews were not the only Syrians who were antipathetic to control from outside.

The Roman military activities in Syria were, in a way, another variant of the population transfer technique which had been used under earlier empires, though where the Seleukids had relied on the voluntary attraction of their cities, the Romans implanted a large garrison and the *colonia* at Berytos, and stationed legions and *auxilia* in the country. This was, of course, a substantial number of men. Each legion had perhaps 5000 men, but there were also a large number of auxiliary regiments in the country, perhaps equalling or exceeding in manpower numbers the men of the legions. This may not seem a large number to add to the several millions of inhabitants of Syria, but they were distinctive, all male, well paid, and were partly concentrated both in their camps and in a relatively small area of north Syria, but also spread in smaller garrisons and units. And all these legions and the *auxilia* actively recruited men from the Syrian population – as well as intermarrying with the female population. In other parts of the empire there is plenty of evidence that retired soldiers tended to make their homes in the region where they had served; there is little or no evidence for this in Syria, but it seems reasonable to assume that this was the practice there also.[51]

Roman citizens

One further effect of the arrival of these forces in Syria was the simultaneous arrival of the new status of Roman citizen. This was a privilege which many Syrians evidently disdained, since it was not a status adopted at all widely for many decades. If one wanted a political career in the empire it was an essential preliminary – and the failure of the citizenship to spread widely implies that for a long time participation in the government of the empire was not a local attraction or ambition. Nevertheless, the presence of the soldiers in Syria meant that increasing numbers of Syrians would inevitably acquire Roman citizenship. Each legionary was supposed to be a Roman citizen when enlisted, and every auxiliary soldier who survived long enough to retire became a citizen on his discharge. But if a legion was to recruit its numbers in a land where there were few citizens, it either had to import them from other provinces or create them. The implication of continuous local recruitment into the legions – which seems necessary – is that the citizen requirement was ignored, or fudged – and that recruits became citizens on enlistment rather than beforehand. The auxiliary troops did not have to be treated in this way, and it seems probable that many of them did not live long enough to take up their citizenship, which they earned with their retirement after twenty-five years' service (legionaries served twenty years). In both cases, however, many of those who reached retirement would have settled in Syria, especially those who were originally recruited there; it is clear that the numbers of Roman citizens in Syria would have slowly increased as time went on and as retired soldiers stayed in the province and settled down, even though there was manifestly no enthusiasm for acquiring such status amongst the people of Syria.

It was also possible to become a citizen by deed of an emperor, or in some cases, of a provincial governor. These can be traced by their new citizen names, for they would necessarily take on the name of their sponsor – so Iulii were probably made citizens by one of the Julian emperors, Flavii by Vespasian or his sons, and so on; non-imperial names imply that the governor was the sponsor. This affected particularly the upper classes of the cities, and the ruling families in the client kingdoms – so Herod was an Iulius, as were the Kommagenian and Emesan kings. This would also spread the citizenship, since the status was hereditary. However, as will be seen, it took some time for Syrians to begin to exercise their power politically (Chapter 2). In part, this was one of the results of the continued existence of client kingdoms in large parts of the region during the first century AD, for these kingdoms had essentially no political influence in the empire, even if their kings were technically Roman citizens, though it was mainly due to the shortage of Roman citizens in the province. Beyond that, and more fundamentally, it is another indication of the considerable antipathy towards Rome and the empire amongst the Syrians generally.

These various effects – the army, the *colonia*, the citizenship – add up to the Roman variant of the population movements applied by all other imperial rulers in Syria. It had only a slow effect on the total local population, but it was

something which operated in both directions: Roman influence penetrated into the Syrian population by way of the spread of citizenship, the presence of the army, and the general influence of Roman rule; at the same time, there was a steady Syrian influence on the Romans in their midst, notably in religious matters, but also, as this study hopes to show, by spreading Syrian people and influence into the empire as a whole.

Syrian antipathy towards Rome

'Syrian' is a term useful as a shorthand for the people living in Syria, but the population was as divided socially as it was geographically. There was antipathy as a result of the unpleasant experiences of Syrians at the hands of the Roman Republican Empire's warlords – indicated by the wide acceptance of the Parthians in their invasions of 40–37 BC. The Syria-wide religion practised there also militated to emphasise local loyalty as against any loyalty to the empire, much as it had operated against the Seleukid kingdom. Against these unifying factors there was the permanent fact that the Syrians were also divided amongst themselves, most obviously by geography and politics, between the several cities – which were often bitter rivals – and the client kingdoms. But a more profound division was that between Greeks and Macedonians on the one hand, and what may be termed 'native' Syrians on the other. It was language which divided these groups, Greek-speakers from Aramaic-speakers, but it was also the fact that the Greek-speakers were the rulers, at least in the cities, where they formed the citizenry and the governing set, a factor inherited from the Hellenistic past. In the kingdoms, by contrast, the rulers had arisen from the Aramaic-speakers, though the attractions of Greek civilisation and culture tended to 'hellenise' them. When Rome took over in Syria, it reinforced Greek control in the localities (and added its own Latin-speakers, especially in Berytos and its neighbourhood), and as the kingdoms disappeared into the Roman province, so did the remaining political powers, such as they were, of the Aramaic-speakers. It is rarely evident or overt in the sources we have, but the Aramaic-speakers harboured a continuing hostility, often deeply buried, towards their Macedonian-Greek-Latin rulers.

This enmity is particularly clear, of course, with the Jews. From the time that Pompey had to besiege and capture Jerusalem in 63 BC, after which he dismantled the Hasmonaean kingdom, the Jews of Palestine were normally hostile to Rome. Some elements in the population became reconciled – or perhaps 'hellenised' – or persuaded, but most were no more than temporarily resigned to being Roman subjects. But Jewish Wars broke out repeatedly for the next two centuries, and even after the crushing of the last open war (132–135), Jewish participation in any part of the Roman Empire and its institutions remained conspicuously absent. There were never any Jewish senators, for example. It was partly Roman reluctance to enlist Jews into their government, but it was also another manifestation of the wider Syrian reluctance to be part of the Roman Empire, shown by the unwillingness of Syrians to become Roman citizens.

This reluctance, at least among Syrians other than Jews, changed as Rome's permanence in Syria was apparently guaranteed, which was not certain for several decades, for the Parthians were close by, the client kingdoms numerous, and the Jews were violently antipathetic. The defeat of the Jewish rebellion by the capture and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 may well have been the decisive event in securing Syria as a whole as a permanent part of the empire, especially since it was followed by the annexation of two of the three remaining client kingdoms (Emesa and Commagene). By the second century AD it is clear that the Syrians had become generally reconciled to the empire's existence and that individuals were willing to take part in its institutions, though enthusiasm is clearly missing. From then on the region was a fully integrated part of the empire, so much so that one might even speak of a Syrian takeover of the empire itself in the first half of the third century. (See Chapter 2.)

This study is dedicated to discovering the extent and type of the participation of Syrians in the empire and of the influence which Syrians had in it. It has been necessary to discuss Syria as a constituent province of that empire first because of the way in which the country slowly became absorbed, which, as will be seen, had its own effect on those processes, but it is also relevant that the population generally was less than enthusiastic (an emotion which varied up to downright and permanent hostility) about membership, which obviously had its effect as well. On the other hand, Syrians had a long history of emigration, both personally and in sending their products and ideas out to the rest of the world, and this operated in exporting Syrian influence into the rest of the empire. This aspect has been touched on already, in comments on the effect of the deportation of Syrians by the empires preceding the Macedonians' in spreading the Aramaic language, and in the uses made of others of the Syrian invention of alphabetic script. It is worthwhile, given the emphasis so far laid on Syrian reluctance to participate in the Roman Empire, to draw attention to this aspect of Syrian history as well, as a counter to the somewhat negative and inward-looking account so far.

Syrians abroad

The most obvious case is that of the Phoenicians, who had been emigrating to the west through the Mediterranean for well over a thousand years;[52] even earlier, Syrians had travelled west before then in Bronze Age voyages to the Aegean and Egypt, and perhaps farther. There were cities founded by Phoenicians from Cyprus to Spain, and these migrants had taken their gods and goddesses with them, just as the Roman soldiers in Syria later took Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Heliopolitanus with them. The home cities in Phoenicia, spread along the Levant coast from Arados to Sidon, continued to send forth ships and sailors and merchants – and still do, of course. In the Hellenistic period they could even settle in Greece, and there were Phoenician temples and clubs of Phoenician merchants in Delos, for example, and at Athens.[53] Similarly, Jews emigrated from Palestine, partly into other parts of Syria, and partly westwards. There was

a Jewish garrison in southern Egypt in the Persian period,[54] and Egypt and Cyrenaica and Asia Minor acquired substantial Jewish populations when the Seleukid and Ptolemaic empires permitted, by their very existence, relatively easy movement within their boundaries. (Of course, Jews had also been forcibly transported eastwards by the Assyrians and Babylonians, and so had other Syrians; and Phoenicians had settled in Babylonia and the Persian Gulf in the Hellenistic period; however, in this study it is the westward movement which is the subject.)

It was people like these who took Tyrian Melqart (whom the Greeks called Herakles) overseas, and Byblian Adonis to Greece and Egypt and Italy, and Yahweh to Egypt and Cyrenaica and Asia Minor. The festival of Adonis in Alexandria was a great occasion, the subject of one of Theokritos' most interesting poems.[55] These examples are cases of voluntary emigration, by people who chose to move, like the Phoenician merchants who went to Delos; Adonis in Alexandria was one of the results of the incorporation of Byblos into the Ptolemaic Empire, and of the enterprise of Byblian merchants and emigrants.

The Syrian region which produced emigrants and soldiers so relatively prolifically was also a major economic resource for the Roman Empire and its predecessors. This was, as with so much else, an inheritance from the Hellenistic past. The poverty-stricken rural society of Alexander's time was deliberately developed by Seleukid and Ptolemaic rulers during the next century. Of course, they did this for their own strategic and economic reasons, since they were mutual enemies, but the process benefited their subjects as well. They fortified their Syrian lands for defence, but the Seleukids in particular had to recruit immigrants from Greece to populate the new cities which they founded in north Syria, in part in order to have a reservoir of military manpower for their army.[56] Four of these cities became major urban centres during the next centuries, including Antioch, reckoned to be the third-largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria. The new cities attracted Greek immigrants, whose presence then stimulated the local agriculture and trade, and within a century the land was densely populated and was becoming steadily wealthier, and the source of a major trade in both Syrian goods and in imports from farther east which were exported to the rest of the empire.

The trade which passed through Syria was perhaps the major source of its wealth and of its value to the empire. Into the land came the goods of the east, incenses from Yemen, spices and gems from India, silk from China, all of which paid a heavy import duty. And these goods were then re-exported – after a reasonable mark-up, of course, and the payment of an export tax – to the rest of the empire, and in Syrian ships. All this was in addition to the country's own products. It was a major source of dyestuffs, particularly the purple and the various shades of red derived from the murex shellfish which were gathered from the sea along the coast. It was in Phoenicia that blown glass was invented, and Syria became one of the empire's major sources of olive oil and wine, and of the pots in which those goods were moved. All of these goods were transported to other lands in ships built of wood from Syrian forests, and were crewed by Syrian sailors.

So Rome took over a land which had suffered from invasion and civil war during the century before Pompey's invasion, but whose urban and economic basis was still sound and, given the chance, vibrant. The first generation of Roman rule (64 to 30 BC) was deeply unpleasant as the Romans fought both each other and everyone else nearby, but the imposition of the imperial peace from the time of Octavian's conquest of Syria in 31–30 BC was all that was required to allow Syrian enterprise to flourish. From then on the region was one of the richest in the empire, a centre for trade, specialised food production – particularly of olive oil and wine – a region of industrial production and innovation, and a renewed conduit for the products of the Mediterranean basin to reach the eastern countries, and for their goods to reach the west.

Syria was therefore one of the wealthiest parts of the empire, comparable with western Asia Minor, Italy, and North Africa, and later southern Spain. Syria also had greater staying power than any of these because of the wide variety of its economic activities. Eventually it formed the economic heart of the surviving half of the Roman Empire after the loss of the west in the fifth century, and it was one of the main economic bases of the Arab Empire after the Muslim conquest in the seventh century. It was its economic wealth which was the basis for Syria's continuing influence in these successive empires.

Syria was thus the source of many gods, and of goods, of numerous soldiers, and of much wealth, all of which was of interest to, or desired by, people in the rest of the empire. It is no wonder that the products of the land permeated the whole Mediterranean basin and beyond, both geographically and socially, from the elevated level of the imperial family and government to the slave pens of every city.

Notes

1 I have attempted to describe this lengthy history in *Syria, an Outline History*, Barnsley 2016.

2 N. N. Frye, 'Assyria and Syria: Synonyms', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51, 1992, 281–285.

3 J. D. Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, Oxford 1990, for the urbanisation of the northern area.

4 D. Harden, *The Phoenicians*, London 1963, 154–155; M. L. Uberti, 'Glass', in S. Moscati (ed.), *The Phoenicians*, London 2001, 536–561.

5 For Pompey's campaign and siege see J. D. Grainger, *Roman Conquests, Egypt and Judaea*, Barnsley 2013.

6 Recent 'big book' accounts of Syria under Rome include K. Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London 2003; M. Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome*, Cambridge, MA 2005; and W. Ball, *Rome in the East, the Transformation of an Empire*, London 2000; though these latter two are not concerned primarily with Syria. N. D. Andrade, *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, Cambridge 2013, discusses the continuing Greek and Syrian 'identities' of the population.

7 Pliny, *NH*, 5.81–82, gave a garbled list of these states, which was deciphered by A.H.M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1971, 262–265, and R. D. Sullivan, *Near Eastern Royalty and Rome, 100–30 BC*, Toronto 1990, discussed them in detail.

8 Grainger, *Seleukid Cities*, chapter 7.

9 Cassius Dio 37.7; Plutarch, *Pompey*, 39.2.
10 Diodoros 40.1 a – b; Appian, *Syrian Wars*, 43–51; Antiochos and Philip soon disappear from the record.
11 G. Holbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, London 2001, 227.
12 Jones, *Cities*, 258–261.
13 Josephus, *AJ* 14.39.
14 Ibid.
15 G. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge, MA 1985.
16 Josephus, *AJ* 14.127–136, 193, 202–210.
17 R. D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Emesa', *ANRW* II 8, 1977, 198–219.
18 Josephus, *BJ* 7.224: R. D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Commagene', *ANRW* II 8, 1977, 732–798.
19 The dates of the transfer of the cities from Commagene to the Roman province are not known, but the visits of Augustus to Syria in 30 and 20 BC are as likely to be the occasions as any other date.
20 E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, chapter 13.
21 Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria.*
22 G. M. Cohen, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and North Africa*, California 2006, parts IV and V.
23 It was still used in the mid-third century in Arachosia, when the Indian emperor Asoka had one of his decrees inscribed in Greek and Aramaic: translations in R. Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, rev. ed., New Delhi 1997, 260–261; the inscription is classified as a 'minor rock edict'.
24 The adaptation of the Phoenician letters to the Greek language, and the insertion of vowels, is well known; the same process took place in north India during the Persian period, to produce the first Indian alphabetic script, Kharoshthi: K. Karttunen, *India in the Hellenistic World*, Helsinki 1997, 265–266.
25 As in Baalbek, the site of the later temple of Jupiter.
26 Josephus, *AJ* 13.45.
27 The irony of this dispute is that both Zeus and Yahweh descended from the same original sky god of the Bronze Age and probably earlier.
28 H. Seyrig, 'Le monnayage de Hierapolis de Syria a l'epoque d'Alexandre', *Revue Numismatique* 11, 1971, 11–21.
29 Lucian, *De dea Syra*; the authorship of this essay may or may not be Lucian's but the text provides interesting information on the cult.
30 P. L. Gatier, 'Monuments du culte "Dolichenus" en Cyrrhestique', *Syria* 75, 1998, 161–169; other references will be noted in the discussion on Dolichenus (Chapter 6).
31 Arrian, *Anabasis* 2.7.
32 II Maccabees 3.7–40; the sum confiscated is as exaggerated as the surrounding events are unbelievable; but confiscation of temple treasures was a fairly regular practice with the Seleukid governments.
33 E. A. Myers, *The Ituraeans and the Roman Near East*, Cambridge, 2010, 104–105.
34 C. Gadd, *Les Dynastes d'Emese*, Beirut 1972; R. D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Emesa', *ANRW* 8.II, 1977, 198–218.
35 J. Teixidor, *The Pagan God*, Princeton, NJ, 1977.
36 R. Burns, *Monuments of Syria: An Historical Guide*, London 1999, 79–85.
37 B. Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Wiesbaden 1979.
38 Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.4.
39 Myers, *Ituraeans*, chapter 3.
40 I did such a study as part of my MA thesis, *Studies in the Inscriptions of Roman Syria*, Birmingham University 1980; the predominance of Aramaic names in the country areas was very clear; it was impossible, however, to estimate the real proportions of Greek and Aramaic, particularly since the propensity to produce inscriptions was tilted towards the Greeks; the vast majority of Aramaic-speakers remained unrecorded.

41 Strabo 16.19–20; Josephus, *AJ* 15.344–345; J. D. Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, Oxford 1991, 177–179.
42 Josephus, *BJ* 2.67, 502, 542.
43 For full details see Chapter 4, Part I.
44 Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 3.15, 1, 3.
45 B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, rev. ed., Oxford 1992, puts this purpose first as part of his thesis that Rome was the aggressor in the eastern wars: chapter III, is entitled 'An Army of Occupation'; Roman military priorities in Syria no doubt changed with time and in accordance with the overall political situation, but clearly the army had two main purposes, to control and to defend.
46 Plutarch, *Antony* 42.
47 Tacitus, *Histories* 3.24–25.
48 Tacitus, *Histories* 3.29, 4.3.
49 The latest compendium of accounts of the legions is N. Pollard and J. Berry, *The Complete Roman Legions*, London 2011; see also for more detail, Y. L. Bohec (ed.), *Les Legions de Roman sous le Haut Empire*, Lyon 2000.
50 A. F. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century* BC, London 1923; A. J. Olmstead, *A History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago 1948, 244–245.
51 J. C. Mann, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate*, ed. M. M. Roxan, London 1983, 150–151; only sixteen men are recorded as settling in Syria during the first to third centuries.
52 M. E. Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West, Politics, Colonies and Trade*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 2001.
53 Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, chapter 7.
54 See note 51.
55 Theokritos, *Idyll* 17.
56 J. D. Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, London 1991.

2 Syrians take over the empire

There are certain ways in which Syrians exercised influence in the Roman Empire, though a final determination of the extent of that influence and of their participation in the life of the empire is difficult to arrive at. This will not surprise anyone who has had to deal with the sources for Roman history, yet the effort seems worth making. In one case a group of Syrians emerged into the full light of imperial history: the occupation of the imperial throne by Syrian emperors of the Severan dynasty and others. But the incidence of senators and of high-ranking *equites* from Syria is perhaps a more certain indication of Syrians' participation in the Roman state. These three groups can be dealt with in sequence.

Emperors

Natives of Syria occupied the imperial throne for most of the generation between 218 and 249, in the persons of the Emperors Elagabalus, Alexander Severus, and Philip the Arab. These were scarcely the most successful of emperors, but the main point of their imperial careers to be considered here is not their conduct or their achievements but the very fact that they reached their exalted situation at the end of a long period during which other (and be it said) better and more competent men than they worked their passages as members of the ruling elite of the empire – that is, as senators. The preceding generation of rulers, the Severan emperors between 193 and 217, were also in part Syrian – Iulia Domna, from Emesa, was the wife of Emperor Septimius Severus and the mother of Emperors Geta and Caracalla – and the succeeding generation after Philip the Arab (244–249) included several Syrian usurpers, culminating with the family of Zenobia of Palmyra and Uranius Antoninus of Emesa. It is therefore the case that powerful Syrian influences affected the imperial throne for most of the century from 192 to the 270s; to these may be added the preceding adventures of P. Avidius Cassius in his attempted *coup* of 175, and the briefly successful local reign of Pescennius Niger, governor of Syria during 193–194. So we have a full century of strong Syrian influence on the empire at the very highest level.

But the occupation of, and the usurpations of, or aspirations for, the imperial throne was not the only, or perhaps even the most important, element in the

Syrian penetration of the power sources of the empire. For the men who had earlier reached the throne had normally done so by way of several possible routes of ascent – by way of the Roman magistracies, above all the Senate, or by way of the army (which tended to overlap with the senatorial route), or by way of the bureaucracy, a much less likely route until the Severan period. By the time any man was near the throne through any of these routes of ascent he was, of course, thoroughly inculcated with the Roman political and administrative ethos, and the most competent of them were able to work the political system, which was less based on ability than on patronage and connections, to their advantage. It was during this century, in fact, that, partly under Syrian pressure and influence, this system of political advancement broke down, and the position of emperor became truly hereditary (as with the Severans), though this was a condition only fully established with Constantine after the end of the period under study here.[1]

In the past the emperors had emerged from the ranks of the Senate, though in real crises the decision had lain with part of the army – whose commanders were, of course, already senators. After the demise of the first imperial family in 68, Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Marcus had all been senators for long periods before becoming emperors. Commodus was the first emperor since Domitian to succeed purely by hereditary right, but both of these men, though young when they succeeded, had had some preliminary experience of government. But under the Severans heredity was all, and the installation of Elagabalus and Alexander Severus as emperors while still children ignored their lack of experience of government, and their general incapacity, and even any clear hereditary claim. And experience of government until then had lain largely in membership of the Senate and participation in the administration of the empire.

So in 193 there began a process by which three Syrians eventually became emperors in the period 218–249. These emperors clearly did not attain to that post as the result of the colonisation of the administration of the empire by Syrians, for none of these three was ever a senator – indeed the first two were still children when they were made emperors. The influence of such inexperienced children upon the imperial system can only have been minimal – Elagabalus' antics were so outlandish that they had no later discernible effect, and Alexander Severus' domination by his mother similarly led to no real results. Therefore, it follows that if any Syrians were to be effective in the empire, they had to be in the Senate.

Here, in anticipation of the discussion of Syrians in the Senate which follows, it may be noted that in the reigns of Severus and Caracalla (193–217), the numbers of Syrian senators certainly increased, thanks to the arrival of several of Severus' wife's family, but even so the total of Syrians in the Senate only reached fourteen, the same as the cumulative total for the previous seventy-five years. But the number of Italian senators in those twenty-four years was 208, of Spaniards was forty-two, and of Africans seventy-three.[2] The occupation of the throne by Severus, therefore, did not significantly increase Syrian representation in the governing elite in proportional terms (nor of Africans to any degree, though Septimius himself was by origin an African). The securing of the imperial

```
(Emperors underlined.)
                        __________
                       |          |
Septimius = Julia      Julia = C. Iulius Avitus
 Severus    Domna      Maesa      Alexianus
       _____|___             |
      |         |            |
Caracalla    Geta            |
                             |
                   ______|_________
                  |                |
      Sex. Varius =  Julia        Julia Avita =  Gessius
       Marcellus    Bassiana       Mammaea      Marcianus
                    |                          |
                 Elagabalus              Severus Alexander

[All those in the table, except for Septimius, were Syrian
or half-Syrian.]
```

Figure 2.1 The Severan dynasty

throne by Syrians thus occurred not because of Syrian power and political activity and influence at Rome or in the empire, but because the Senate had ceased to be the most significant centre of power, having in effect given way almost completely to the army, and this was the enduring effect of the usurpation of Severus. (See Fig. 2.1.)

Senators

It took considerable effort and much wealth to reach the Senate, one of the main positions of influence in the empire. There was a long sequence of offices which aspirants had to occupy successfully before reaching the highest point, which was the consulship. In the process a man could gain experience in the army, as a military tribune and perhaps as a legionary commander, in legal affairs as a praetor, in finance as a quaestor, or as a financial officer in Rome in the *aerarium militaris* or the *aerarium Saturni*, or in a similar position on the staff of a governor of a province. Once appointed as a governor all these experiences might well be put to use. In all this a man would see much of the empire. The legions he served in, for example, were invariably close to the imperial borders; he might serve as quaestor in a province, and his praetorship might be provincial as well, possibly even as the governor of a province. Then there were other posts he might occupy also, as curator of one of the Italian roads, or as a substitute governor in a province. When he reached the position of governor, he might rule more than one province in succession. As a legionary commander he might have to fight a war, perhaps in command of an expeditionary force of several legions. Then, finally, he might become consul, but for only two or four months; this might

be the peak of his career, but it was also, invariably and paradoxically, one of the briefest, most ceremonial, and least powerful, of his offices. This would usually lead on to the governorship of one of the major provinces for perhaps three years – and Syria was one of these major provinces; the ultimate honour would then be a second consulship.[3]

There were ways of skipping some of these stages, just as it was not unknown for extra stages to be added or existing ones to be extended or multiplied, but there were minimum ages below which some offices could not be held – forty-two years was the minimum age for a consul, for example, or thirty-five if a man was a patrician (though these rules did not apply to members of the imperial family). It was also possible to become politically prominent by never leaving Rome, by holding offices all of which were in the city, as did the future Emperor Nerva[4] – for, after all, Rome for such men was always the really important place, and the provinces had no real importance in the politics of the empire – except at moments of crisis, especially when the imperial succession was uncertain or in dispute. But the system was flexible, and in a way it was intended to test the men going through its offices, and to give them training of a hands-on sort in the imperial administrative system; to some degree promotion came by merit, though patronage was the usual method.

It was a lengthy process, of course, with each stage (except the consulship) lasting for one or two years, though, as noted, it was flexible and some governorships lasted longer. It was also customary that a man would not occupy offices in a direct sequence, but there would be a gap of a year or so, or more, when he was usually out of office between posts. In that time he might occupy himself with those personal affairs which had probably been neglected while holding an office distant from his home; in that time he would also be expected to attend the Senate, of which he was a member from the moment of his election to the lowest office.

So a man's official career would probably last twenty years before he reached the topmost offices. This is something to be remembered in studying their careers. All too often we do not know the precise stages of a man's career before the consulship, and it is unlikely that we can be informed of the date of those stages, unless one of them coincided with a datable event, such as a war or an imperial succession. But the date of a man's consulship is usually known, and that means that, by subtracting twenty or thirty years from that date, we can detect at least the approximate year when the man began climbing the ladder.

In studying the entry of Syrians into the Roman administrative system, therefore, it is possible to locate the approximate beginnings of the movement by locating the earliest entrants. Three men emerge as the first from Syria to pursue an imperial political career. They were L. Iulius Marinus, probably from Berytus, his son L. Iulius Marinus Caecilius Simplex, and L. Iulius Proculeius, who was from Tripolis. The elder Marinus is recorded as proconsul of Pontus-and-Bithynia in 89/90, consul in Rome in 93 and as governor of Moesia Inferior in 97; his first post was that of praetorian rank, so he probably secured his first offices between 70 and 75.[5] His son's career is known in much

greater detail, beginning as one of the *quattuor viarum curandarum* in Italy. He reached the consulship in 101 having served in the IV *Scythica* legion in Syria as military tribune, and then in XI *Claudia* as its commander, which was based at Vindonissa in Upper Germany; he was in Macedonia as quaestor, in Cyprus and Pontus-and-Bithynia under his father's governorship, and as governor of Lycia-and-Pamphylia and Achaia. It is noticeable that these postings outside Italy were always in Greek-speaking provinces, except for the legionary command.[6] Proculeius' career is only partly known. He never reached the consulship, but he is recorded as quaestor and praetor, and finally as governor of the large province of Cappadocia-and-Galatia, which, like its neighbour Pontus-and-Bithynia, was usually held before the consulship by a man of praetorian rank. Unlike any of those governed by the younger Marinus, this was a military province, but any other military commands he might have held are not known. The date of his governorship was 79 to 81 or 82, so he probably began his truncated career therefore about the year 70.[7]

These examples are perilously few to base a theory on, but it looks very much as though it was the events in the east in the last years of Nero's reign and the Year of the Four Emperors – that is, 65–70 – which propelled these first Syrians into the ranks of senators. In particular, in the great Jewish revolt of 66–70 men from the cities of north Syria were conscripted to assist or fight with the Roman forces, and this included a large contingent of 1500 men from Berytos, the hometown of Marinus and his son.[8] Berytos was unique in Syria. It had grown without much royal assistance in the Hellenistic period, surviving at least one sack, had been refounded as a Roman *colonia* by Augustus in 29 BC with veterans from two legions, V *Macedonica* and VIII *Gallica*, and it was the one place in Syria where Latin was spoken as an everyday language (apart from the legionary camps) and where Roman citizenship was common. In 15 BC the bounds of the city were extended to include part of the Bekaa Valley, including the old Syrian and Ituraean shrine at Baalbek, which had been renamed as Heliopolis, and whose god soon became Jupiter Heliopolitanus. The fact of a Latin-speaking population of Roman citizens gave such men as Marinus a clear advantage in beginning a political career over other Syrians; but he also needed to be wealthy, for there was a need to finance such a career, and that was not cheap by any means. (There were intermittent attempts by emperors to insist that senators or potential senators should invest part of their wealth in Italian land, but this requirement, by the very fact of its repetition, was clearly evaded, and probably did not apply for any length of time.)[9]

In the contest in the Year of the Four Emperors, 68–69, the eventual winner was, of course, Vespasian, the commander of the forces fighting in Judaea, assisted by his son Titus, who took over the command when his father went off to Italy. Since the emperor had great, even decisive, influence in the choice of all 'elective' officials, it cannot be coincidental that these Latin Syrians reached the Senate at the very time that the first emperor since Augustus who was familiar with Syria seized the throne. The Berytians are therefore less surprising than Proculeius, from the Greco-Phoenician city of Tripolis, but he was an Iulius, so

his family had probably been enfranchised under Augustus; he was perhaps the only rich man in the city, and of course the city undoubtedly provided a force to assist in suppressing the Jewish rebellion.

The Iulii Marini and Proculeius were the pioneers; the second-century lists of consuls – regrettably not complete – contain the names of several more men from Syria who reached that rank, though, for a province of its size and wealth and importance, they are not many. Whereas there were only two in the whole of the first century AD, in the next half-century there were four, and in the forty years from 150 to the civil war of 192 there were about ten. The accession of Septimius Severus in 193 brought a new influx, but they were mainly members of his wife's Syrian family. This will be considered a little further on.

The list of the consuls, as will be clear from these earlier paragraphs, hide a large number of men who only reached the lower rungs of the career ladder, like Proculeius from Tripolis. These were men who became praetors or even only reached the rank of quaestor, but they and their male descendants were automatically members of the Senate. Some of these men died in the midst of their careers, some were judged unworthy, some of them suffered political exclusion; some no doubt began the climb but did not feel that the career was worth the effort. There were those whose wealth would have permitted them to take up these offices, but who chose not to embark on the quest. And then there were also those who felt that the consulship was not actually the summit of their ambitions.

The origins of these men explains a good deal of how they entered the race. Marinus has already been noted as originating from Berytos, the Roman *colonia*, as did the Velii.[10] They were, and were descended from, Roman citizens, and this was the essential first step; speaking Latin, preferably without a Greek, or still worse, a Syrian accent, would also be important.[11] Plenty of people did not acquire the Roman citizenship either because they did not earn it or, perhaps snobbishly, did not want it. But in Syria there was another group besides the colonists' descendants who were citizens. This had been a reward handed out by the emperors for helpful service, or by the late Republican warlords. Thus the Judaean royal family descended from Antipater were all citizens, including Herod, though many of them did not advertise the fact, since it was not something which made for popularity amongst their Jewish subjects. So also with the royal families of Emesa and Commagene, all Iulii. Since by definition even after their kingdoms were absorbed into the province, the descendants of the deposed people were rich, had local influence, and were Roman citizens, it is hardly surprising that they figure occasionally in the consular lists – C. Iulius Antiochos Epiphanes Philopappus, the son of the last Commagenian king, was adlected to the Senate by the Emperor Trajan in the rank of praetor and became consul in 109 for four months. That is, he was excused the hard work of the preliminary offices and vaulted almost directly to the consulship.[12] His contemporary C. Iulius Alexander Berenicianus was a son of the former king of Cilicia, but he was also descended from one of the Philopappus' relatives and from the Judaean royal family; in his case he seems to have worked his passage: he was a

commander in Trajan's Parthian War before becoming consul in 116 and later was governor of Asia late in Hadrian's reign, although to be sure this last was scarcely a laborious office.[13] His father, C. Iulius Alexander, another Cilician king, was also made consul by Trajan, probably in the same honorary way that admitted Philopappus.[14] Half a century later one of the consuls for 164, or perhaps a little earlier, had the cognomen Sohaemus, and was probably C. Iulius; the name implies an origin in the deposed Emesan royal family, though he actually owed his consulship to his position as king of Armenia.[15]

It is quite likely that the advance of these men was either resented by their ambitious contemporaries or they were dismissed by them and others as 'Orientals'; most of them probably spoke Greek as their first language, and Latin with an accent. Those who came to the consulship by way of the hard work of early offices, however, were also privileged. The early *colonia* of Berytos has been noticed as producing five consuls between 70 and 190. Tripolis, rather surprisingly, besides L. Iulius Proculeius, also produced two other consuls from a single family: L. Aemilius Iuncus in 154 and his son of the same name in 183.[16] This is surprising because the city was not large or important, nor was it a *colonia*. The Tripolitan Aemilii were, from their name, descended from a family which had acquired the citizenship under the Republic, and no doubt had prospered since – Tripolis was one of the termini of the trade route from Palmyra and points east.

Ptolemais-Ake in Palestine was made a *colonia* by the Emperor Claudius in the 50s,[17] and a century later one man from there reached the consulship: Flavius Boethus, consul in the early 160s. His name indicates that he was of a Greek family which had acquired Roman citizenship from one of the Flavian emperors, no doubt Vespasian during his time in Syria in 66–70. But Boethus may not have gone through the preliminary offices any more than did the descendants of kings. He was a philosopher, of the Peripatetic persuasion, and it may have been his eminence in this matter which brought him the consulship in the reign of the philosopher Emperor Marcus. But Boethus did go on to become governor of his home country, Syria Palestinae, in 166/167, so perhaps he was a worker consul in some respects after all.[18]

The final three of these second-century Syrian consuls were all quite certainly men who took an active role in government. Two were from Antioch and were probably brothers. Ti. Claudius Pompeianus was governor of Pannonia Inferior between 164 and 167, consul in 167, and one of the Emperor Marcus' commanders in the German war of 169–171. He was consul again in 173, and was a senior commander again in Marcus' German war between 176 and 179. He was clearly an able man, but he owed part of his prominence to the fact that he married the Emperor's daughter Lucilla (who was also the widow of his former imperial colleague Lucius Verus) in 169 – or perhaps it may be that he was married to Lucilla because of his prominence and ability. He survived the reign of his brother-in-law Commodus by keeping in retirement with a story of failing eyesight,[19] and even survived into the reign of Severus despite being offered the throne at one point in the crisis of 193. He had been a mentor of the Emperor Pertinax, and he returned to his estates with Pertinax's death.[20] His brother Ti.

Claudius Quintianus appears to have remained in Antioch, where he presided at revived games in that city in 181: he is described as a senator by one source, but whether this was due to an assumption based on his brother's eminence is not known.[21] But Pompeianus was clearly one of the worker consuls, having risen through the lower offices during the reign of Antoninus Pius, though we do not know the precise details. He had already reached governorships and the consulship before marrying into the imperial family. His relationship to Marcus made him almost a joint-emperor.

The third of these men was one who aspired even higher. C. Avidius Cassius was the son of Hadrian's Greek secretary, Heliodorus, an *eques* who rose to be Prefect of Egypt from 137 to 142, an unusually long tenure, no doubt because it spanned the end of Hadrian's and the start of Antoninus' reign. Heliodorus was connected in some way with the defunct royal house of Commagene, and so was related to Philopappus and Berenicianus, though he chose, it seems, to emphasise his descent from the even more remote Seleukid kings; he came from Cyrrhus in north Syria.[22] The son, Cassius, as a result of his parentage, may have had accelerated promotion, but he was also another worker. The earliest post he is recorded as holding was as commander of an army in Gaul between 162 and 166, by which time he had reached praetorian rank; his career had therefore probably started ten or so years earlier. He was consul in 166 (the year before Pompeianus); then he was appointed to an overall command in the east, first as governor of Syria, then governor of Arabia as well. This was in succession to the Parthian War of Lucius Verus (who died in 167), a time when a firm hand was needed in Syria, both to repel any Parthian counter-attacks, and also to hold down any restiveness in Syria itself. He held this post – effectively deputy emperor in the eastern provinces – for nine years, which by this stage in Roman history was a remarkably long tenure in a single office – only emperors stayed in office for this length of time – and with a highly unusual and extensive geographical responsibility. Then, believing a rumour that Marcus had died in Germany, he had himself proclaimed as emperor (quite possibly after a strong hint from Marcus' wife). There was clearly more to the whole affair than a sudden impulse by Cassius, who was scarcely a man to believe any old rumour which arrived, but when the rumour proved to be untrue he was killed for his presumption by one of his own officers on Marcus' instructions.[23] That a Syrian and the son of an *eques* could consider himself a possible candidate for emperor is as remarkable as Cassius' earlier career and, along with the position reached by Pompeianus, is a powerful indication of the new strength of Syria in the empire, though this was hardly due to their numbers.

The increase in Syrian representation in the Senate over the century and a quarter between 68 and 192 had been steady if hardly dramatic, and it made relatively little impact in numerical terms, for the Senate had 600 members, possibly more, and the few senators from Syria were unlikely to have much effect. Certainly by the time of the civil wars of 192–197 there were several Syrians in the Senate, but they were swamped by men from almost any other region. During the period 117 to 192, the reigns of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus

Aurelius, and Commodus, there were 346 Italian senators known by name and only ten from Syria, while from Africa and Spain, which in terms of wealth and/or size may be considered comparable with both Italy and Syria, the numbers are seventy-two from Africa and thirty-nine from Spain. In terms of numbers, therefore, Syria was near the bottom of the list.[24]

The civil war of 193 finally settled the issue of the location of the decisive power in the empire in favour of the army. This, of course, had also been one of the results of the civil wars which ended the Republic, but the achievement of Augustus had been to cloak that in a civilian guise, and to establish a theoretical dynastic succession of emperors (erratic and extremely uneven though that was). The civil war of 68–70 seemed to have had the same effect, and the emperors who were successful during the following century all paid much attention to military needs, but they were also able to pose as civilians for much of their reigns – Antoninus Pius could boast of not conducting a war, and of hardly ever leaving Rome.[25] In 193, however, after the murder of Commodus – the first emperor who had succeeded by direct hereditary right since Titus and Domitian – the Senate made an attempt to take charge of organising the appointment of the next emperor. This might have succeeded had a clear decision been made and held to. The first attempt, choosing P. Helvius Pertinax, was overthrown by his murder, and the next produced an unseemly dispute between Didius Iulianus and Flavius Sulpicianus (Pertinax's father-in-law), in which the temporarily decisive voice turned out to be that of the Praetorian Guard.[26]

The reply to this mess was that three provincial governors, each commanding a section of the army, had themselves proclaimed as emperors more or less simultaneously. The British army put up the governor D. Clodius Albinus, the Syrian army C. Pescennius Niger, and the Pannonian army L. Septimius Severus. Severus was the nearest of the three to Rome and Italy, and was able to cloak himself in legitimacy by gaining the support of the Senate – at sword-point – and by seizing and holding the city of Rome. The other two could thus be regarded as in rebellion and were eventually disposed of.

The main Syrian connection in all these – apart from the province being Pescennius Niger's base – was that Severus had a Syrian wife, Julia Domna, and she brought into the highest parts of the Roman government a set of relatives who became honorary consuls and so members of the Senate.[27] The husband of her sister Julia Maesa, C. Julius Avitus Alexianus, was an *eques* with a substantial earlier career; he was adlected to the Senate by Septimius, who appointed him commander of the IV *Flavia* legion, but he was then shunted aside to be governor of the minor province of Raetia, and consul in about the year 200. After a gap he returned to hold a series of offices in Septimius' later years and through Caracalla's reign.[28] This second career is the crucial point; until his appointment as consul he was pursuing the normal career of a high-flying *eques*, somewhat assisted by his relationship to the emperor, but then suffered the enmity of C. Fulvius Plautianus, Septimius' Praetorian Guard commander, who supplanted him as Septimius' main adviser; the second career was the direct result of his royal connection.

The daughter of Iulia Maesa and Avitus, Iulia Avita Mammaea, was married to Gessius Marcianus, another *eques* from Syria. He came from Arqa in Phoenicia, formerly the centre of a small Ituraean principality; like Iulia Domna from Emesa, it is possible he was descended from the old local royal family, though the link can only be a guess in both cases.[29] Gessius had been a procurator, but the details of his career are not known.[30] He was the father of the Emperor Severus Alexander, but was murdered in 218. Mammaea's sister, Iulia Soaemia Bassiana, was married to Sex. Varius Marcellus, an *eques* again, who came from Apamaea in Syria. Like Avitus he had an interrupted career, but from 208 he was busy with Septimius in Britain, in control of military supplies, prefect of the military treasury in Rome, and then governor of Numidia (and commander of the III *Augusta* legion). He was adlected to the Senate by Caracalla, whom he supported after the murder of Geta. He died about 218, soon after Caracalla himself.[31]

Royal connections were therefore only of importance in the careers of these Syrians after more than a decade while they had pursued their equestrian careers in the normal way during Septimius' reign. But the second parts of their careers clearly owed everything to their connection with the imperial family. This pattern may also in part account for the success of the family of Claudius Pompeianus from Antioch, the previously mentioned son-in-law of Marcus Aurelius, for members of that family occupied the consulship on several occasions under the Severans. Septimius concocted a retrospective adoption of himself as a son of Marcus, which therefore brought in the Antiochian family as well. Pompeianus' nephew, Ti. Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus, who had been betrothed, or perhaps only promised, to the daughter of the Emperor Lucius Verus and Lucilla, reached only to the quaestorship, for he was persuaded to join in a plot against Commodus in 182, after which he was killed; Lucilla was first exiled and then killed.[32] The son of Pompeianus and Lucilla, however, survived (he was only six at the time of his parents' fall), but succumbed to Caracalla's rage in 212, when he was, or had just been, consul.[33] His own son seems to have been praetor in 209, in the same year as Quintianus the son was consul. In a third generation of the family, where the precise parentages are not clear, the family produced consuls in 231, 235, and 241.[34] At that point the family disappears from the record. If their wealth was based in Syria, it could be that they were ruined by the devastating Sassanian invasion of Syria in 242. But it is also clear that the family flew rather too close to the heat of power, which brought the deaths of several members at the hands of the more vicious and paranoid emperors; in that case the family did well to survive for so long.

There is one more possible Syrian royal senatorial connection. It seems possible that a relative of the wife of the Emperor Gordian III, Furia Tranquillia, was made a senator. We know his name only in part (Sab . . . Modestus), but he was certainly from Arabia.[35]

There were only a few other Syrian senators in the third century. A royal connection was clearly the best way in; indeed it was almost the only way to reach the Senate if you were Syrian, but there was strictly limited number of people to whom this applied. Berytus produced one more senator to follow the

Marini and Velii (see the next section), two men named M. Sentius Proculus, one of whom only reached the praetorship, and the other the quaestorship; they were presumably father and son.[36] Another Antiochene was Ti. Flavius Claudianus, who was a military tribune in XXII *Primigenia* and a praetorian official in Thrace; he was consul in 229/230.[37] Finally there is Claudius Cassius Agrippinus, a grandson of Avidius Cassius, and so he may be presumed to be Syrian, who seems to have been a senator largely due to his father's and grandfather's rank. No offices he held are known – he was not apparently a worker consul.[38]

The Palmyrene interlude in Syria in the 260s, until 272, promoted several men to senatorial status but in such cases it was apparently only honorary. (In the same way, the future Emperor Macrinus had been awarded the *ornamenta consularis* by Caracalla, but never attended the Senate.)[39] One Arab family, however, worked its passage. L. Iulius Apronianus Maecius Pius, called also Salamallianus, came from Arabia – that is, the former Nabataean kingdom which had become the province of Arabia. His name implies that his family received the citizenship at the hands of an unknown governor of Arabia, though certainly not before the annexation of the kingdom in 106. He held several offices – military tribune, service in the XI *Claudia* legion, adlected to the Senate, aedile, a post in Belgica province, commander of I *Adiutrix*, governor of Galatia and of Numidia, and finally he was designated as consul (though whether he actually served is not clear).[40] His sons, with similarly lengthy names, are, of course, counted as senators, though none of their activities is known. Finally, from the same region, there is another honorary consul, a sophist from Gerasa called Valerius Apsines, who was awarded *ornamenta consularis* in the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235–238).[41]

There were thus vanishingly few Syrian senators, even if we include those from Arabia in the count. Most of those whom we can locate were members of, or connected with, the successive royal families and so had personal influence, but the scarcity of Syrians in the administrative posts is really very striking, considering the size, the large population, and the wealth of the Syrian region. The royal relatives of the emperors in fact were more or less confined to the Severan family and its connections. The women of that family brought in their husbands and children and the power of such people increased as Severus aged; then, when his eldest son, Caracalla (half-Syrian through his mother), was murdered (in 217), a family conspiracy connected with the dissatisfaction – and the gullibility – of the soldiers in the Syrian garrison brought Severus' grandnephew Elagabalus to the throne as emperor at the age of fourteen, a usurper against Macrinus. He lasted four years, and was then replaced, after what was probably another family plot, by another grandnephew of Septimius, Severus Alexander.[42] He was no more successful as an emperor than Elagabalus had been, though he did last longer, in part because of the ability of his mother, Iulia Mammaea, who seems to have been the effective ruler.[43] He was also murdered, along with his mother, and in the confusion of more civil and foreign warfare a third Syrian seized power in 244. Philip the Arab used his position as Praetorian Prefect (an equestrian post) to establish himself as emperor after the death of Gordian III in the Persian war, having, like Macrinus with Caracalla, probably contrived

Gordian's death. Philip lasted for five years, and presided over the celebration of Rome's millennium in 247, an occasion for irony amongst both ancient and modern historians. His reign ended amid a series of rebellions, in which he was defeated in battle and killed.[44] Zenobia of Palmyra made her son Vaballathus emperor, but again this was hardly effective; even driven by her he only lasted a couple of years.

Equites

A second route into the Roman administration was by way of a lower level of the system, which was staffed by men who were of equestrian rank, where a lower level of personal wealth was required as a qualification for belonging. This social group also developed a distinct career structure, with the positions of procurators in the various provinces as the senior grade, and the posts of Prefect of Egypt, Praetorian Prefect, Prefect of the Corn Supply (of Rome), and Prefect of Rome's police, the *Vigiles*, as the summits; these were the equestrian equivalents of governors of the greater provinces. Several minor provinces – Judaea until before 70, Alpes Poeninae, Noricum, Raetia – were governed by procurators of *eques* rank. In other words, it was a worthwhile career path for non-senators, requiring perhaps more obvious ability than senators needed to display, but less personal wealth. It was also, for those who reached the top, a path to increased wealth, and there was a steady seepage of *equites* into the senatorial ranks in part because of that.

These were clearly extremely able men, and this co-option was generally a sensible notion, advantageous to the imperial government, though often it was the son of the former prefect who actually reached the Senate, being rich enough by his inheritance to qualify. From Syria, again from Berytus, C. Velius Rufus' career is documented from his time as a centurion in the Jewish War to a post as procurator (that is, governor) of Raetia. He was with the Emperor Domitian in his Rhine and Danube campaigns in the 80s, and was decorated for his services in the Marcomannic War. His grandson (probably), D. Velius Rufus, was consul in the 140s (and so had begun his political career about 120), and another grandson was consul for the second time in 168; his great-grandson was consul in 178, and was killed by Commodus four years later.[45]

The female relatives of the Empress Iulia Domna mainly married *equites*. These men were, of course, the heads of the society in the Syrian cities from which they came, in part since there were so few senators in the region to take up that role, and to be the husbands of prominent women. The leading lights would therefore include those whose eminence came from descent from royalty (such as the L. Iulius Sohaemus who was consul in the 160s), and those who ranked as *equites* in Roman society. This was, of course, a measure of personal wealth and required the possession of considerable areas of land. The two groups intermarried. Iulia Domna's family was quite likely linked to, or even descended from, the Emesan royal family which had ceased to rule in 72, just as Gessius Marcianus was probably a member of, or at least connected with, the former

Ituraean ruling family of Arqa. These people thus created a new social crust over the province – one would not be surprised to discover marriages with the greater families of Antioch and Apamaea, just as there was with Varius Marcellus of Apamaea, and just as Pompeianus married into the Aurelian royal family.

Equites had access to the Roman administration below the senatorial level, and a fair number of Syrians can be located here – Philip the Arab is perhaps the most eminent. Their origins tend to be a little wider geographically than those of the Syrian senators, but, as with the senators, the first of them came from Berytus. The father of the senator Aemilius Iuncus (consul in 127) was a procurator, that is, of *eques* rank, from that city.[46] Another was the grammarian M. Valerius Probus.[47] L. Antonius Nabo was a centurion and then a procurator, and came from, or at least was memorialised at, Heliopolis,[48] the former temple city of Baalbek which first had been incorporated into the Berytus *colonia*, and then was made a *colonia* itself by Septimius.[49] As with the senators, there do not seem to have been any examples of Syrians in these positions before the Flavian period. These men mirror the senatorial entrants from the same region, in that neither appears before that period (though some may have begun their careers under Nero). Again one is tempted to point to the sudden prominence of Syria in Nero's reign, with the wars of Corbulo and the Vespasian acting as catalysts in bringing Syrians into the Roman political and administrative system.

The second century saw rather more Syrians at this level, but their numbers are still very few when the size of the population and the wealth of the region is considered. In Rome in Trajan's reign there was Archigenes of Apamaea, a doctor, and Trajan employed Apollodorus of Damascus in some major engineering projects, including the great bridge across the Danube.[50] The father of Avidius Cassius, C. Avidius Heliodorus from Cyrrhus, was Hadrian's *ab epistulis* and Prefect of Egypt.[51] In intellectual circles, Hadrianus of Tyre was a professor of rhetoric in Rome in Commodus' reign and lectured to Septimius at a point in his career when Severus was under a cloud and had to absent himself from Rome and from politics;[52] he became Septimius' private secretary when the latter became emperor. Also from Tyre was Domitius Ulpianus, the lawyer.[53] But professional men, engineers and lawyers and so on, did not generally enter the administrative system.

The Severan regime allowed or assisted other Syrians of *eques* rank to reach Rome – actual presence in the city was essential if one was to undertake a political career. The husbands of Iulia Maesa, Iulia Soaemia Bassiana, and Iulia Mammaea were all *equites*, and two of them had substantial careers at that rank. Another lawyer, Aurelius Papinianus, was prominent under Septimius and Elagabalus, and was said to be another of Iulia Domna's relatives.[54] An Arab sophist, Heliodorus, operated in Caracalla's reign.[55] Aurelius Eubulus from Emesa was killed along with Elagabalus, and was no doubt a friend of the emperor.[56] Later in the century the Emperor Philip the Arab's brother, C. Julius Priscus, was an *eques*,[57] and so also no doubt was Philip himself originally, since his previous post of Praetorian Prefect was the summit of an equestrian career. A family pair from Antioch, Cocceius Iulianus Synesius and his son Cocceius Bennaius, were active

after 250; the family presumably owed their citizenship to the Emperor Nerva a century and a half before.[58]

Once again, considering the size of Syria, this is a meagre harvest, and one must conclude that, for *equites* in Syria, as for their wealthier senatorial compatriots, a Roman administrative career was not something to attract them, though whether this was the result of prejudice against Syrians, or of a prejudice of Syrians against a government career, is not easy to decide; it is also possible that a professional career as a lawyer or engineer was seen to be more attractive. This was a wealthy region, and it stands to reason that there was a substantial number of men rich enough to become both senators and *equites* had they wished to put themselves forward. Yet few did, and the number of men in this list who qualified as teachers and lawyers – Hadrianus, Ulpian, Papinian, Probus – or as technicians – Archigenes, Apollodorus – only emphasises the absence of other men from Syria who took up careers in the Roman civil service.

Such a career might also involve a good deal of personal danger. There may have been certain reluctance amongst emperors to execute senators, something which they regularly proclaimed their unwillingness to do when they became emperor, but *equites* were far more expendable. At the same time it was a series of *equites* who came to power in the empire in the aftermath of the careers of Septimius Severus and Caracalla – neither of whom had been really reluctant to execute senators. Men of equestrian rank had, of course, been rising through the government system all through the first two centuries of the empire. So the high-flying *equites* who reached imperial power – Macrinus was the first, in 217 – were in fact following on from a series of prominent men who were the sons of *equites* and who had reached high positions, such as Avidius Cassius or Pompeianus. In that sense Avitus and Gessius and Varius, the husbands of the Emesan women, were not particularly unusual. But after the murder of Caracalla it was his Praetorian Prefect – and therefore an *eques*, despite holding the *ornamenta consularis*, M. Opellius Macrinus, who promoted himself as the new emperor.[59] He did not hold power for long, and his succession disturbed the senators when they realised his origin,[60] but he had broken through the glass ceiling; it was now possible in the future for other *eques* to aspire to the throne, and in fact in the next generation, from 218 to 249 the emperors were mainly of equestrian origin.

The obvious explanation for the absence of Syrians from the Roman administration is that they were generally unwilling to participate in the government of the empire, which in turn may be the result of an antipathy towards Rome and all its works. This is something already detected during the earliest years of Roman control, in, for example, the widespread welcome for the Parthian invasion of 40 BC, or, even more anti-Roman, the various Jewish revolts. It may tentatively be suggested that this failure to participate may be an inheritance from this past experience. Syria and Syrians had been ruled by non-Syrians since the eighth century BC (except for some parts in the disunited period of the first centuries BC and AD). The automatic reaction, engrained in the population by those long centuries of neglect or oppression, was to stand back and endure.

There is little or no sign of any non-Greek native Syrians participating in Roman government – the exception would seem to be the Arabs Salamallianus and the Emperor Philip and his brother Priscus.

There is, of course, still another explanation: Syrians did not enter the Roman service because they could make a living, and become wealthy, in other ways. Trade was the obvious alternative career, along with landowning, and the wealth of the region would suggest that trade was a widely practiced activity – something at least technically prohibited to senators. Syria was a producer of widely sold wine and olive oil, though it is less renowned for this than Africa and Spain because much of the produce was consumed locally or in neighbouring regions; by not exporting to Rome, therefore, this production and trade is and is less studied. (The numbers of Syrians who emerge as lawyers and engineers might also be ascribed to this reluctance, combined with the opportunities for achieving wealth in such careers.) It is, in the condition of the sources, impossible to even estimate the numbers of men involved in both activities, but the few Syrians in Roman service, contrasted with the region's evident wealth, does imply that most Syrians who had the choice opted for a mercantile or farming life.[61]

Intellectuals

Syria was one of the intellectual centres of the empire, but not until some decades after its annexation. Tyre developed as a centre of legal education, and Antioch, as is to be expected of a great city, was a centre for more general education. Yet it seems that, from the minimal information we have, Syrians tended to go elsewhere for their further education – Rhodes was popular, or Athens, or Rome. Syria was not a place where men from Italy and Greece went for the philosophical education.

It was, however, always possible to achieve a high standard of education in Syria without leaving the country. In the first century BC the most accomplished historian active was Poseidonios who came from Apamaea. A century later there was Josephus from Judaea. Both in fact moved to Italy to write their works of history, Josephus to escape the dangers of living in Judaea, where he was seen as a traitor, and Poseidonios because, like Polybius, whom he emulated, he saw that Rome was the centre of events, and it was there that he could best acquire raw material for his work.

Judaea was the origin of the Christian organisers of the earliest Church. How far they can be regarded as intellectual is not certain, but they could certainly be counted as influential. Intellectually, probably Paul (from Tarsus, but he worked in Judaea) was the best educated, but he disputed on equal terms with the fisherman Peter. The expansion of Christianity provoked anti-Christian polemic, notably, in Syria, from Porphyrios of Tyre in the third century AD.

The most directly influential men in terms of the empire were probably the three lawyers who reached high office under the Severan dynasty. Papinian perhaps came from Africa (like Septimius) but was educated in the legal schools of Tyre and was a pupil, along with Septimius, of the philosopher Scaevola.

Septimius made him Praetorian Prefect in 203, the office having become as much a centre of legal decisions as an administrative post, and much less a military command. He was murdered by the Guard in the reaction under Septimius' son Caracalla.

After a gap of a decade, two other lawyers were appointed as Praetorian Prefects: Ulpian, who was Syrian, and Paulinus. All three of these men, lawyer-like, wrote copiously, and their notes were used much later when Justinian's lawyers compiled their great Digest. How much influence these men had in their lifetimes is, however, impossible to even suggest. Legal process, which they clearly wished to follow, was hardly the priority of third-century emperors.

Philosophers were seen as the intellectual summit amongst the educated in the empire, and several Syrians are among this select group. Antiochus of Ascalon had influence in Athens as a leader of the Sceptic school. Boethus of Caesarea was prominent enough to be made consul by the Emperor Marcus, but precisely for what is not known. Iamblicus, who came from Tyre and returned there after studying in Rome, was a Neoplatonist, like Porphyry his teacher. This had become representative of the dominant philosophy of the time, though it was scarcely original or dynamic, and much of the energy of philosophy went into disputing with Christianity, and later in promoting it.

On the whole it seems unlikely that any of these men had any great influence on events or, more diffusely, on the intellectual temper of the empire. The lawyers who became Praetorian Prefects paved the way for the further development of that office in legal terms, and their writings clearly influenced other lawyers later; the historians might have had some influence if anybody ever read them for any purpose other than entertainment, for they did contain political lessons, even if they were writing of particular and unusual events; the philosophers' influence may well have been as pervasive as Neoplatonism itself, which became a generally accepted philosophy throughout the educated circles of the empire; it was however the Christian thinkers, the apostles and their followers, who had the greatest influence, if not immediately then in the future, and that influence was developed in the process of disputes with those who disagreed with them. This was a process which went on throughout the three centuries between the execution of Jesus and the adoption of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine. By the time Constantine took it up, of course, it was very different from what Jesus had advocated.

Conclusion

This chapter is entitled in a way which suggests that for a time Syrians ruled the empire. This is, of course, no more than superficially the case. The three emperors from Syria had little or no real influence over the imperial administration or policy in the long term. Elagabalus was described as indulging in adolescent religious experimentation while in Rome, but in this he had no permanent impact, though the worship of the sun does become more obvious in the empire in the following years; it was also promoted by the Emperor Aurelian

(after his return from campaigning in Syria). Alexander Severus and Philip the Arab occupied the imperial office and presided over the administration without altering its methods, its situation, or its work. Nor, apart from intruding some relatives into positions of power and/or profit for relatively short periods, did any of these three men increase in any significant way the presence or participation of Syrians in that administration.

The senatorial lists for the rest of the third century after Philip the Arab's death continue to show very few Syrians, so following on the pattern of the previous two centuries. The Severan family connections account for a good half of the Syrian senators, and this is in a period (after 238) when the Senate once more wielded some real authority. One might assume that the Syrians who qualified in wealth terms for senatorial membership still did not see it as worth their while, or worth risking their wealth (or their lives), to aim for a career which led to the Senate. This is also a time, of course, when the *equites* were gaining access to still more offices. Competing in a widening talent pool would also be less than enticing.

There was, however, one office which some Syrians did aim for. The examples of Avidius Cassius, Pescennius Niger, Elagabalus, Severus Alexander, and Philip the Arab all suggested that usurping the office of emperor was an enterprise worth attempting. Of course, two of those five had failed, but Elagabalus, Alexander and Septimius Severus, and Philip did succeed, which may well have suggested that, after a couple of failures, Syria had become a good place of origin for an ambitious man. The attempt, of course, did require control of an army, which is what the three successful usurpers contrived to have, and in this they were following the example of Septimius, to go back no further than 193. After Philip the Arab (who died in 249) there were two more serious attempts to seize the imperial throne out of Syria: by the Palmyrene family of Odainathus, and by a man calling himself Uranius Antoninus from Emesa. Neither of these succeeded in seizing the throne, but under Odainathus' widow, Zenobia, much of the eastern part of the empire was ruled for a short time by that family, and she made her son Vaballathus the usurping emperor, though his position is regarded as similar to that of a local Syrian/Arabian king by some.[62] Uranius Antoninus' father appears to have made an attempt to seize the throne during the reign of Severus Alexander, and the son tried again in the 260s. They were based at Elagabalus' hometown of Emesa and appear to have been using the local religion, based at the sun temple of El in the city, as their main support, possibly on the pattern of Elagabalus in Rome – he had capitalised on his position as priest in the city of Emesa at his original usurpation.[63] There were also several other local attempts to seize power but none of these had any real success; it was seen, however, that Emesa was an imperial centre. The fact that Syrians kept trying to seize imperial power does imply a continuing local disenchantment, if no more, with the Roman imperial system as it impacted them from outside.

These Syrian, and Syrian-based, grasps at imperial power were spread over a century, from Avidius Cassius in 175 to the Palmyrenes in 272. If this is seen as a sort of communal Syrian enterprise it obviously failed, though this is perhaps

not a convincing way to see it. The area of support which any of these pretenders as emperors had in Syria was strictly limited. The early attempts, by Avidius and Pescennius, were wholly based on the Roman army in the province, and had virtually no reference to the province itself, even though Avidius had some local connections, and Niger gained control of the whole of the eastern part of the empire, including Asia Minor and Egypt. Similarly, Elagabalus' usurpation depended on his sponsors' recruitment of early support from a single legion – and on the widespread dislike of his opponent, Macrinus. Elagabalus, as a relative of the Severans, the recently imperial family, did have a certain hereditary appeal, and this carried through to Alexander, who deliberately adopted the Severan name in place of Gessius, his own patronymic. But Philip only had the authority of the Praetorian Prefect, the commander of the expeditionary army, and Zenobia's civil base was minimal – no one took Palmyra seriously as an imperial power – while Uranius Antoninus had no real support, it seems, other than his god and perhaps the local city militia of Emesa. Of wider support, other than acceptance by a local city where a usurper could enforce his power in the same way that Septimius persuaded the Senate in Rome to support him, there was none. Just as Zenobia had far too narrow a base at Palmyra for her imperial ambitions, so even Syria itself as a whole was not enough.

This brings out one major point: that such influence as Syria and Syrians had in the rest of the empire did not depend on, and did not come from, political power, which required a substantial number of members of the Senate; if these did not exist no serious influence could be exerted. Indeed it is quite astonishing that a major region such as Syria produced so few major political, or indeed administrative, figures. There is really only one comparable province – comparable in size, population, and resources – which sent fewer political figures to Rome or into the administration, and that is Egypt, where there appears to have been a deliberate policy of excluding Egyptians from such powers, just as there was a policy of excluding Egyptians from the army, and perhaps this operated on both the Roman and the Egyptian sides. It may well be that something of the same social mechanism was operating also in regard to Syria. There was certainly a degree of dislike of Syrians, which is voiced by the historian Herodian when he complained about Syrian fecklessness.[64] The result was that, whenever a Syrian attempt, or an attempt by Syrians, was made to seize control of the empire, there were simply not enough Syrians in positions of power to see the attempt through to success in the long term. In order to rule the empire, it was clearly necessary to have a much wider base of support amongst the administrators than Syria had provided.

Notes

1 The hereditary nature of the imperial office had, of course, been clear from the time of Augustus, but in the sense of succession from father to son it had happened only once before 180 (in the Flavian family – who coincidentally owed their political prominence to the success of Vespasian and Titus in the Jewish War, and so could be claimed, if somewhat

distantly, as Syrian products). Even after 180, only occasional direct successions took place before the family of Constantine I, though throughout the third century emperors tended to aim at passing the throne to their sons without succeeding in that endeavour.

2 For a discussion see D. S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay AD 180–395*, London 2004, 66–69, with plenty of references; for individual and provincial details see Halfmann, *Senatoren*.

3 The *cursus honorem* is well studied: R. J. A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome*, Princeton, NJ 1984, discusses qualifications and process in chapters 1 and 2; another useful summary of the 'career' structure is in A. R. Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain*, Oxford 1981, 4–45.

4 J. D. Grainger, *Nerva and the Roman Succession Crisis of AD 96–98*, London 2003; Ronald Syme's comment was that he was 'an emperor who had never seen an army or governed a province': *Tacitus*, Oxford 1954, 1.

5 *PIR* I, 401.

6 *PIR* I, 408.

7 *AE* 1964, 484.

8 Josephos, *AJ* 17.287; *BJ* 2.67.

9 Talbert, *The Senate*, 55–56.

10 A family from Heliopolis who reached the Senate about 130; the foundation of their rise was with C. Velius Rufus, a prominent military man from 70 onwards: *IGLS* VI 2796. Three more of the family reached the consulship between 150 and 180: D. Velius Fidus, Velius Rufus, and D. Velius Rufus Iulianus: Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 153, nos. 64, 64a, 65 and 189, 114.

11 Septimius Severus's Punic accent was noted: A. R. Birley, *The African Emperor, Septimius Severus*, 2nd ed., London 1988, 35.

12 Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 131, no. 36.

13 Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 141, no. 47.

14 *PIR* A 200 and I 136; Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 199, no. 25.

15 *PIR* S 546; Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 175, no. 96.

16 *CIL* XIV, 145, no. 55; H. J. Oliver, 'Relatives of Aemilius Iuncus', *Hesperia* 36, 1967, 42–56.

17 Pliny, *NH* 5.75; E. Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, vol. 2, Edinburgh 1979, 125.

18 Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 134, no. 95.

19 Dio Cassius 73.20.1; Birley, *African Emperor*, 242, note 1.

20 *HA, Pertinax* 4.9–10; Dio 74.3.1–3; Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 181, no. 103l; Birley, *African Emperor*, 89.

21 Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 200, no. 135.

22 Dio Cassius 69.3.5.

23 Ibid., 177–180, no. 100; M. L. Astarita, *C. Avidio Cassio*, Roma 1983; R. Syme, 'Avidius Cassius, His Rank, Age, and Quality', in *Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium, 1984–1985*, Bonn 1987, 207–222.

24 Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 68–70.

25 *HA*, *Antoninus Pius* 7.11–12.

26 *HA*, *Pertinax* 10.8–11.13, and *Julianus*; Dio Cassius 73.9–11.

27 B. Levick, *Julia Domna, Syrian Empress*, London 2007.

28 Barbieri, 286.

29 *HA*, *Severus Alexander* 1.3, though this is garbled.

30 Barbieri, 264–265.

31 Barbieri, 517.

32 *HA*, *Commodus*, 4.1–4; Dio Cassius 72.4.4–5; Herodian 1.8.3–6; Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 200, no. 135; Barbieri 166.

33 Barbieri, 167.

34 Barbieri, 1000, 1001.

35 Barbieri, 1716.

36 *PIR* S 391.
37 Barbieri, 1573/4, 1580; this is a long process, which must have taken over twenty years.
38 Barbieri, 146.
39 Dio Cassius 79.13.1.
40 *PIR* I, 161; Barbieri, 1065.
41 Barbieri, 1441.
42 *HA*, *Heliogabalus*; M. Icks, *The Crimes of Elagabalus*, London 2013.
43 Note that, since Caracalla, no emperors had been senators.
44 Potter, *Roman Empire at Bay*, 236–241.
45 *ILS* 9200 = *IGLS* 2796; Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 153, nos. 64, 65 and 189, no. 114.
46 *PIR* A, 354.
47 *PIR* V, 176.
48 *PIR* A, 854.
49 Dio Cassius 50.15.1.3–4.
50 Dio Cassius 13.1 and 6; Pliny, *Epistles* 8.4.
51 *PIR* A, 1405; Dio 71.22.2; Astarita, *Avidio Cassio*.
52 *PIR* H, 4; Birley, *African Emperor*, 73.
53 R. Syme, 'Fiction about Roman Jurists', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung fur Rechtsgeschichte* 97, 1980, 78–104.
54 *HA*, *Caracalla* 8.2.
55 Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum* 2.32.
56 Dio Cassius, exc 79.21.1.
57 D. S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, Oxford 1990, 213–215.
58 *PIR* C, 1215, 1219; *PLRE* I, 161, 872.
59 Dio Cassius 79.11.4–6; Herodian 4.14.1–3; *PIR* O, 108.
60 Dio Cassius 79.18.4; Macrinus was a well-known, well-liked, and efficient lawyer and administrator, which softened the blow for the Senate, but he was also a Moor, and this disturbed them as much as his (former) rank.
61 M. M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols, 2nd ed., Oxford 1957, especially 266–273.
62 Potter, *Roman Empire at Bay*, 266–268; this demotion is not acceptable to Zenobia's modern champions, of course, who see her, ludicrously, as an empress and as a feminist icon; she was certainly a useful target for hostile Roman imperialist propaganda – as well as a complete failure.
63 H. R. Baldus, *Uranius Antoninus*, Bonn 1971.
64 Herodian 2.7.9 and 3.4.3, for example.

3 Syria as a Roman base

In the last generation of the Roman Republic Syria was vulnerable both to Roman civil warfare and to invasion. Its reluctance to be a part of the Roman Empire was manifest in many areas, from resistance to the initial Roman conquest, to rebellions against Roman domination by the Jews in Palestine, reluctance to submit to Rome in the other client kingdoms, and eventually to the widespread welcome for the invasion of Parthian horsemen in 40–37 BC. In the period of imperial peace which followed the end of the civil wars, it was therefore necessary, from the Roman point of view, to install a substantial garrison. This was mainly placed in north Syria, where the garrison of four legions was stationed, and was spread throughout the northern region, while the auxiliary regiments were spread rather farther afield. In this region the army not only dominated antipathetic Syria, but also acted as a defensive force against any possible Parthian reinvasion, or, of course, could provide an invasion force against Parthia if that was necessary.

Augustus (while still Octavian) supervised the new dispensation in Syria in 30 BC while overseeing the annexation of Egypt, consequent upon the deaths of Mark Antony and Cleopatra.[1] The Roman provincial system in Syria actually copied, if in a Roman version, the original establishment of Seleukid control in the north. Whereas Seleukos I had planted four great cities in the area, garrisoned by royal troops, and inhabited and governed by Greek colonists, Augustus planted four legions: in place of Antioch, Seleukeia, Apamaea, and Laodikeia as the controlling cities, legions were planted as garrisons at Antioch, Cyrrhus, Apamaea, and Raphanea. The difference between the two military occupations was due to the fact that Seleukos was occupying and providing for the defence of a devastated land inhabited only by a peasantry, while Augustus was occupying a now-populous country, peopled with cities inhabited by large populations, and so he had multiple problems in both controlling and defending it. In addition, the legions were not stationary, but could be, and were, moved to new positions as needed.

Those legionary stations were changed more than once, and will be discussed in the next chapter, but here the role of Syria in the strategic problems of the Roman Empire will be considered. Choosing north Syria as the main Roman military base region in the east was a statement of intent. In the Syrian region,

which may be said to have stretched from the Amanus and Taurus Mountains in the north to the Sinai Desert in the south and was bordered on the east by the Syrian Desert, only north Syria provided a substantial territory under direct Roman control at the time of Augustus' visit. To the north were satellite kingdoms such as Commagene and Cilicia, with others beyond them in Asia Minor; to the south Palestine was at the time under the control of King Herod, a Roman loyalist, but there were other satellite states between Palestine and the northern region. (These satellites, client kingdoms in the main, disappeared in the course of time, as did Herod's kingdom; only minor changes took place over the first century of Roman control and domination in Syria, though in Palestine the Judaean kingdom, endlessly troublesome, was abolished, reconstituted, divided, and annexed during that time, before blowing up into a great rebellion.) The north and Palestine were linked by the roads along the Lebanese coast and through the Bekaa Valley, and the first was put under Roman control by the plantation of the substantial Roman *colonia* at Berytus – which was later expanded to gain direct control of the second route inland.

The initial dispositions of the legions, occupying positions well away from the Euphrates frontier, imply that Augustus in 30 BC was more concerned about maintaining internal control in Syria than in defending it from possible outside attack. This, given the country's rebelliousness and its partiality for the Parthians, was clearly necessary. He also suppressed at least two of the client kingdoms whose kings had equivocated during his war with Antony, though they were later reestablished, the kings having thus been taught a lesson in the necessity of loyalty. The expansion of Herod's authority over all Palestine, including many of the Greek cities, was also a measure designed for, ultimately, Roman control. Yet the defence of Syria against the outside enemy had also to be part of his consideration. In 40 BC a Parthian army had penetrated across the Euphrates, crossing probably at Seleukeia-Zeugma, and had reached as far south as Gaza and as far west as western Asia Minor.[2] (And this had been only the latest of such invasions, others having arrived in the previous decade and a half.) It had taken three years to drive the Parthians out and back across the Euphrates; at least two of the client kingdoms of Syria had taken the Parthian side. This cannot have been out of Augustus' mind, and provides the essential background to his decision not to wage war with the Parthian kingdom, and to make a peace of no annexations. He could dress it up for home consumption by his proclamation that he had recovered the lost legionary standards, but anybody looking at the detail would understand that he had deliberately chosen not to invade Parthia, in part because any such invasion, involving as it would the removal of much of the Roman garrison of Syria, might well provide an incentive, at least an opportunity, for Syrians to rise in rebellion.[3] (An expedition into south Arabia, which was aided, or perhaps sabotaged, by the Nabataean kingdom, was also a resounding Roman defeat; this was no doubt another deterrent to any new eastern adventure.[4])

This defensive stance was not something that was always acceptable to later emperors, who evidently perceived Parthia as a standing threat and tended to react to any perceived threat by making preemptive attacks. In fact, it seems

probable that the Roman policy towards Parthia was normally one of peaceful coexistence, though the Parthian kingdom was internally often unstable,[5] and the Romans could be excused for not knowing what the Parthians intended at any one particular time. During the next three centuries, therefore, Syria was the Roman military base from which repeated invasions of the lands to the east were made.[6] At the same time, it remained the essential base from which to control both the Syrian province and the Syrian satellite states. Despite the unpleasant experiences of north Syria during the wars of the Roman Republican demise, the region generally remained loyal to the empire, if, as is argued in Chapter 2, without manifesting any real enthusiasm – acquiescence, perhaps rather than active loyalty. This submissive attitude might best be ascribed to the presence of four Roman legions and their associated *auxilia*. But outside north Syria it was necessary to campaign against the client kingdoms – into Palestine on several occasions between Herod's death in AD 4 and the Second Jewish Revolt in 132–135, and on other occasions against Emesa and Commagene (AD 72–73) and Nabataea (in 106). That is to say, for well over century from the time of Augustus' dispensation in 30 BC, the Roman base in north Syria was probably more concerned with internal Syrian affairs than with any perceived threat from outside the imperial boundaries – most of its military activity was directed at targets inside the empire. The movement of one of the legions forward to guard the crossing point at Seleukeia-Zeugma was thus essentially a defensive move. The most likely date for this is sometime after the peace of 20 BC; by AD 18 a legion is recorded to be stationed there. In 20 BC also two of the Syrian client states were restored as monarchies, with the return of the local kings to Emesa and the Ituraeans.[7] The coincidence with the Parthian peace clearly indicates the relaxation brought by the peace treaty. Apart from these changes, the overall policy in Syria continued to be that of Augustus, internal control and defence against possible attack.

The first major crisis, or group of crises, which challenged this policy and ultimately brought about a change, came between 56 and 73, when Syria became, first, the base for Roman campaigns into Armenia, whose control was disputed with Parthia,[8] then a campaign into Palestine, where the great Jewish revolt began in 66,[9] and eventually expeditions to conquer the client kingdoms in Emesa and Commagene.[10] Even at the height of the war waged by Cn. Domitius Corbulo against Armenia, the Romans had been careful to avoid a direct challenge to Parthia, and had also been concerned to preserve a large garrison within Syria. As it happened, they were fortunate that Judaea did not explode into rebellion until after the Armenian War had been concluded. Had these two military crises coincided the outcome might well have been very different. But from the point of view of this study, what is noticeable is that the armies which were used to fight in Armenia, and those which were used to conquer Judaea and other client states in Syria, came in both cases largely from north Syria. They were reinforced, by legions from the Danube and from Egypt, but it was the Syrian legions which bore the brunt of the heat and the burden.[11]

The failure of Parthia to exploit the repeated Roman difficulties in Syria and Judaea is one of the puzzles of international affairs in the first century AD. Internal problems within Parthia may be part of the explanation, but the eventual success of Corbulo's War in Armenia in very difficult territory and against a military power using Parthian military methods (and receiving discreet Parthian military aid), may well have been equally important. Also, of course, the Judaean War quickly resolved itself into a siege of Jerusalem, which could be maintained with relatively small forces, leaving most of the Roman forces in Syria available in the north should other action be needed.

The fourth of this group of crises for the Syrian army in this period came when it became one of the vital forces in the imperial succession crisis of 68 to 70 – the army's fourth campaign, therefore, in these fifteen years. One of the crucial moments in this crisis was when Vespasian, commanding in Judaea and aspiring to become emperor, made diplomatic contact with Parthia, and was assured that the Parthians would not intervene;[12] this permitted Vespasian to release more of his forces for the western campaign to Italy, though he certainly kept enough troops in Syria to continue the Jewish War and to deter any Parthian change of mind. Once Vespasian had succeeded in his expedition to Rome and had become emperor in the city itself (and not just amongst his troops in the east), it is noticeable that his military son Titus made a well-publicised visit into north Syria, becoming most concerned to calm internal problems in the great cities, but also to make further diplomatic contact with Parthia.[13] Soon after, in 72–73, two potential weaknesses in the Roman defences, the kingdoms of Emesa and Commagene, were annexed, and the XVI *Flavia Firma* legion was posted to Samosata, the former royal centre of Commagene, a formidable fortress.[14] Substantial military works were also undertaken in north Syria in order to improve access to the Euphrates frontier.[15] Despite the apparent good relations with Parthia, and the supposed success in Armenia, two further legions were deployed to the eastern frontier, and placed in eastern Anatolia. From this time on, the defence of the eastern frontier did not wholly depend on the army in Syria.[16]

In this fifteen-year period, therefore, the Roman army based in north Syria campaigned deep into Armenia, south as far as the border with Egypt, and sent troops as far west as Rome. This was an active and capable army, clearly one of the major forces within the empire, and its control had to be ensured in any particular internal Roman crisis. In 97, for example, when the succession to the usurping Emperor Nerva was in discussion and dispute, the governor of Syria, Curiatius Maternus, made several moves which indicated that he regarded himself as a potential successor to Nerva. Exactly how he was thwarted is not clear, but he was removed from office and the commander of one of the legions in Syria, Larcius Priscus, was installed as interim Syrian governor. That Priscus was apparently the most junior of the Syrian legionary commanders must have been a signal that the Syrian army as a whole had no ambitions to intervene in the succession despite Maternus' own ambitions. But Maternus had clearly believed that if he could get his legions – or rather his legionary commanders – to agree to a usurping proclamation, he might well have a good chance of emulating

Vespasian; it was apparently his failure to convince those legionary commanders which caused him to fail in his potential bid.[17] With the support, or only the acquiescence, of the Cappadocian legions, Maternus would have been able to gain control of the whole east as far as the Sea of Marmara, probably including Egypt – just as had Vespasian in 69–70 (or as Pescennius Niger was to do a century later). As it happened, a much greater army, of about ten legions, had been assembled by Domitian on the northern frontier with a view to an invasion of Germany, and it was this army whose candidate, Trajan, was imposed on Nerva as his successor, and in the name of a return to Domitianic policies. (We do not know what messages passed between this army and Syria, but the disparity in power was surely evident to all, and in such circumstances it would not need much to persuade the Syrian legionary commanders to lie low; Maternus had not gone so far as to declare himself emperor, and survived.) Power in the Roman Empire grew from the barrel of a gun, so to speak.

By this time, as will be argued in the next chapter, the legions in Syria were in part, and in some cases in large part, composed of recruits collected locally from the Syrian population. There were also large numbers of auxiliary regiments which had been recruited in Syria, voluntarily and involuntarily (see Chapter 5). The Syrian social contribution to the military power of Rome by this time emulated that of any other region of the empire, and greatly exceeded most – in strong contradistinction to the indifference to the Roman administrative system which is displayed by the wealthy (see Chapter 2). It was, of course, normal to dispatch locally recruited auxiliary regiments to distant parts of the empire so as to cut local roots and to impose a 'foreign' garrison on those distant areas; the Roman administration was in constant fear of rebellion, with reason. But the legions, being composed of citizens, at least in intention and theory, could be assumed loyal, and dispatching recruits to the distant part was hardly necessary.[18]

The new emperor, Trajan, was a warrior, and he set about expanding the empire in the way Domitian had intended. Late in his reign, he organised the annexation of the last of the Syrian satellite states, the Nabataean kingdom.[19] This was evidently carried out because, first, he planned to invade Parthia and did not wish to be concerned that a semi-independent kingdom lay in his rear; and second, he also managed to augment his own army with at least six auxiliary cavalry and camel regiments – which would be especially useful in facing Parthian forces – by incorporating the Nabataean army into the Roman army.

Trajan was able to use the military improvements made by Titus in his employment of Syria as his main base for the war on Parthia, but he also initiated substantial further developments, particularly in the form of improved means of transportation from the coast to the Euphrates – a canal, and better roads, some of which were constructed during his father's period as governor of Syria in the 70s; the Via Traiana Nova, which was the old route called the 'King's Highway', along the plateaux east of the Jordan, was sufficiently improved in Trajan's reign to be given his name; it was, of course, an extremely ancient route.[20] He was perhaps assisted in this by the employment of the engineer, Apollodoros of

Damascus, who had built the great bridge across the Danube to provide communications into Dacia, Trajan's earlier successful conquest.

He assembled a substantial army, of which a considerable number of units were originally enlisted in Syria. Syria itself was also the main logistical supply base for the enlarged army – Trajan was using an army of probably seven legions, which was about 35,000 men, plus *auxilia* of perhaps an equal number; three of the legions, III *Gallica*, IV *Scythica*, and VI *Ferrata*, came from the Syrian garrison, X *Fretensis* came up from Judaea, and III *Cyrenaica* from Arabia; two, XII *Fulminata* and XVI *Flavia Firma* were Cappadocian. In addition there were forces, full legions or vexillations, from several of the legions on the Danube, probably doubling the legionary contingent. In theory this would leave only a single legion between the Black Sea and the Red Sea, but substantial detachments were probably left in the legionary base camps, and there would have been plenty of auxiliary regiments left also; no doubt heightened patrolling, to give the impression of larger numbers, was also undertaken.[21] This force would have taken at least a year to gather – Trajan's cousin Hadrian had been installed as governor of Syria for the occasion – and in that time Syria prospered. The supplies for the army were partly requisitioned but the rest were purchased – a much safer method inside the empire, socially and politically, than simply taking supplies, though once across the frontier, requisition would be the norm. The resulting influx of coin into the province considerably boosted its wealth and its economic activity. Hadrian's presence ensured a conspicuously loyal man in command of Trajan's base; his governor of Arabia, Claudius Severus, had been in office there for nearly ten years; he was clearly another Trajanic loyalist installed to hold the base firmly.

The campaign itself began in 114, and at first Trajan was superficially successful. The Roman army defeated whatever resistance the Parthians put up, and conquered Mesopotamia and Babylonia; Trajan himself was able to march as far south as the Persian Gulf and ruminate about reaching India.[22] But then that which he had feared and hoped to have avoided by his annexation of Nabataea and his appointments of Hadrian and Severus, a rising in his rear, occurred. The rebellion was by Jews in Egypt, and it spread to Cyprus and Cyrenaica. It is not clear whether this was instigated by Parthian agents, or was in some way spontaneous, but it was clearly reprehensible of Trajan, after the Jewish rebellion in 66–73 (in which his father had been a Roman commander), and some obscure trouble in the 90s, and the revocation of a law in favour of the Jews which Nerva had promulgated, to have ignored the possibility of trouble.[23] His drastic reduction of the Syrian garrison left no reserves in the east for dealing with such an uprising.

Parthian resistance, weak until then, stiffened at the same time, hence the implication that Parthian agents might have been active amongst the Jews of Egypt. Whether Trajan had understood this or not, the main strength of the Parthian kingdom was in Iran, even if the kingdom's main source of wealth was in Babylonia, as it had been for a long time for the Seleukids. The Roman conquests had been considerably eased by the rapid submission of a series of Parthian

client states in Mesopotamia and Babylonia, thus validating in a way the Roman decision to eliminate their own Syrian clients, since they appeared to have been instantly disloyal to Parthia. But Trajan decreed the kingdoms' abolition and their annexation as Roman provinces, which was probably unpopular with the people of the kingdoms, just as it was, of course, with the displaced royal families.

A campaign by a Roman army into Iran would have cost him so much in men and wealth – and Trajan would have a restless Mesopotamia and Babylonia in his rear, as well as the rebellion in Egypt – that it was probably no more than a pipe dream, in the same way as his vague ambition to follow Alexander to India. The Roman army bequeathed to his successors by Augustus had been calculated in size for the defence of the empire of that time, and its size was also decided in relation to the economic ability of the empire to support it. It was simply not large enough to indulge in such major conquests when it had to garrison the rest of the empire as well.

The combination of the rebellion in Egypt (which did not apparently spread into Palestine, rather surprisingly) and greater and effective resistance by Parthia, persuaded Trajan that Iran and India were out of his reach – if he ever doubted it – and he made political arrangements in Babylonia and Mesopotamia to form a mixture of client kingdoms and new provinces, very much on the pattern in Syria which he had finally dispensed with as a result of the annexation of Nabataea, thus admitting that he should have done this from the start. Then he withdrew from his conquests, by this time old and ill. In the wake of the army's withdrawal the Parthians returned, and Trajan's gimcrack arrangements collapsed. Back in Syria his governor Hadrian took charge. When Trajan died, in Cilicia in 117, his wife, Plotina, arranged that Hadrian should take over as the new emperor, which was largely acceptable to the army and its commanders in the east.[24] For the second time Syria had become the source of a new imperial regime, based upon control of a large army. Hadrian withdrew all his units from the conquered territories, and returned to a frontier along the Euphrates.[25]

The history of events between the first Roman invasion of Parthian territory by P. Licinius Crassus in 55 BC (which came to grief at the battle of Carrhae, where the legionary standards recovered by Augustus were lost) and the failed invasion by Trajan in AD 115–117 should have informed all subsequent emperors that adventures such as those were very likely doomed to failure. And indeed when the next Parthian War came, in the 160s, there seems to have been no serious attempt by the Emperor Lucius Verus to make any conquests at Parthian expense, though the Roman army did march as far as the great Parthian city of Ctesiphon in Babylonia.

This war had been a clear case of Parthian rather than Roman aggression.[26] The Parthian king Vologaeses IV aimed to gain control of Armenia, which would permit his forces to threaten long stretches of the Roman frontier. A Roman riposte was defeated and Lucius Verus were sent to oversee this new war. The Edessene client kingdom was taken by the Parthians, and it is said that a Parthian force raided into Syria.

The Roman reply was a powerful campaign into the Mesopotamian region, involving fighting at several places on the Euphrates, a crossing of the Tigris (and apparently penetration into Media, for the first time since Mark Antony's expedition), and the capture and sack of the great cities of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and Ctesiphon. Armenia was invaded and Artaxata sacked. The instrument of all this was the Syrian army, which had to be shaken out of its slackness first (unless this was mainly a recall of Corbulo's measures a century before). As with earlier campaigns the Syrian/Cappadocian armies had been reinforced for the occasion from the European armies, plus the usual auxiliaries.

The results were various. Edessa (the kingdom of Osrhoene) was returned to its Roman client status after two years (162–164) with a Parthian-appointed king; its new king had spent those years as a refugee in Syria, and his kingdom was now undoubtedly kept under close Roman control. The Euphrates frontier was extended farther southeast along that river, at least as far as Dura-Europos; in Mesopotamia Carrhae was made into a *colonia*, as was Dura. Carrhae was originally part of the Osrhoenean kingdom, so its annexation was a distinct reduction in the king's territories. For Syria this was a clear improvement in security, for the Parthians had now been pushed a good hundred miles to the east.[27] (The details of this war are very sketchy indeed, and the sources tend to concentrate largely on the supposed dissolute behaviour of Verus, who found Syria a particularly congenial place for such activity.[28])

Lucius Verus died not long after his return from Syria. (The country was becoming a lethal habitat even for wealthy men who had been raised in Italy; several governors as well as two emperors died in the province in the first two centuries, presumably from the local diseases.[29]) Lucius Verus' invasion of Babylonia had released a virulent disease which may well have been bubonic plague, and the returning soldiers helped spread it to Syria and then throughout the empire; the population was substantially reduced. It had proved possible, once again, in 163 (as had been in 115), for the Roman army to march into Babylonia with Syria as its base, as had been possible for several Seleukid kings, but it had also proved impossible once again to maintain such a conquest.[30]

Parthia, by this time an old, weary, and divided kingdom, which had perhaps also been badly weakened by the plague, had proved to be unable to resist these invasions. It had now also become a prime victim for any emperor with aspirations to martial glory, particularly for one who had seized power by usurpation and now wished to prove his fitness by a successful military campaign. It was the renown acquired by Avidius Cassius, who commanded in Verus' Parthian War, which was the basis of his attempted usurpation in 175. Augustus and Vespasian had managed to avoid full-scale war by adroit diplomacy, as well as necessarily being more concerned with other problems, but Trajan clearly felt that he had to prove himself militarily, even after the conquest of Dacia, in part because he claimed to be the political heir of the aggressive Domitian, and so did the next military emperor, Septimius Severus.

Severus, having made himself emperor, was in the difficult position at first of controlling only the central area of the empire, with competing claimants – pretenders,

he would no doubt have described them, or rebels – at the extreme eastern and western ends of the empire. These men also claimed the imperial title based on their command of parts of the army: Clodius Albinus in Britain, Pescennius Niger in Syria. Severus skilfully fended off Albinus with a specious recognition of his title to the succession, and then suppressed Niger, who had gained control of Asia Minor and Egypt as well as Syria; then, of course, he turned and dealt with Albinus.[31] After twice successfully promoting their commander as emperor (Vespasian and Hadrian) therefore, the Syrian army had now failed on three occasions to do the same – with Curiatius Maternus in 97, with Avidius Cassius in 175, and with Pescennius Niger in 194.[32]

Severus appears to have believed that, having defeated their commanders, he had to establish control over the armies in Britain and Syria as well, which were both at least potentially disloyal as a result of Niger's defeat, by leading them on campaign, and providing them with victories under his leadership. He may, of course, have been correct in this, but this meant yet another Parthian War. This time there was no attempt to conquer both Mesopotamia and Babylonia. Instead, Severus campaigned through Mesopotamia as far as the upper Tigris Valley, raided into Babylonia to sack Ctesiphon again, and then organised his retained conquests as garrisoned provinces. This brought into the Roman Empire the whole of the Jazirah, formed into three new provinces – Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Adiabene – a strategic forward position from which its army could dominate both Armenia to the north and Babylonia to the south.[33] Syria now became less central to Roman military strategy, as it was protected by these forward conquests even more effectively than before – or so it must have seemed. Syria's garrison of legions was reduced as they moved forward out of Syria and into the conquered land (see Chapter 4, Part I). Severus also took his revenge on those parts of Syria which had supported Niger, broke up the largest province into smaller versions, and demoted some of the cities, including Antioch.[34] He also spent some time inspecting and organising the frontier system facing the desert.[35]

The removal of the Parthian frontier eastwards by 200 miles and southeast to Dura may have provided increased security for Syria, but Syria itself remained the logistical base for the army. The productivity of the lands between the Euphrates and Tigris – Mesopotamia, the Jazirah – was probably sufficient for the inhabitants, but it cannot have supported the new Roman garrisons of several legions. Food and supplies of equipment must therefore have come from Syria. Olives and vines cannot be cultivated in Mesopotamia, and, though the steppe could support herds of animals, wheat or barley was not plentiful. The increased prosperity for Syria brought by the larger army used in the wars therefore continued in the subsequent peace because of the region's larger garrison. It was, for example, in this period that the 'dead cities' of north Syria gradually expanded the production of, above all, olive oil.[36]

The incidence of wars in the east between the reigns of Augustus and Septimius had slowly increased. There was a gap of ninety years between the Parthian invasion of 40 BC and Corbulo's War, then of sixty years until Trajan's War, then fifty until Verus', and then only thirty-five until Severus'. This increased

frequency was troubling enough, but more concerning than this, perhaps, was that Septimius' invasion had scarcely been opposed by the Parthians at all, except by the inhabitants of the semi-independent city of Hatra, which Septimius seems to have had a particular grudge against. When his invaders reached Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, a flourishing city thirty years before when Avidius' army sacked it, they found it was a deserted ruin. The Parthian state was clearly in serious trouble.

Calculating the time-gaps between the wars, it is hardly surprising that another of these wars arrived after only twenty years. Caracalla, Septimius' son, had an Alexander-complex, like many Roman invaders of the east, but in Caracalla's case he took it seriously. He followed Alexander's route through Asia Minor, for example, and visited Alexandria; when he moved east, he camped at Arbela close to the Gaugamela battlefield. He was probably aiming at another Parthian War, but, as with his father, there was little opposition, and since Arbela was in Adiabene, which Septimius had made into a province, he may well never have moved out of Roman territory. So whether his expedition counts as a new war is not clear. It may have been part of the trigger, however, which began the destruction of the Parthian kingdom and its replacement by the better organised and sterner Sassanid dynasty.

The Sassanid king developed a much more professional and tougher army than the Parthians had commanded, and the new regime was aggressive. As a curious counterpart to Caracalla's Alexander-fixation, it harked back to the Akhaimenid Empire as its inspiration – which included a claim to 'recover' lands to the furthest boundaries of that empire. Not surprisingly conflict with Rome soon developed (when another Alexander – Severus – was emperor). The fighting lasted on and off then for thirty years. Alexander Severus survived it, but Gordian III did not; Philip the Arab staged a usurpation in the midst of it, then made a humiliating peace when he found his army was trapped in Babylonia;[37] Valerian was captured. And as a final demonstration that the new Persian Empire carried a big enough stick to hurt its enemies with, on two occasions Syria was invaded (252 and 260) with great destruction.[38] The damage was more than just material, for large numbers of Syrians were dragged away to Persia – again implying, like the deserted Seleukeia – that Parthia had suffered as badly from the plague as its Roman opponent. Syria, of course, was the base for the Roman army in the east, and as its logistic base, it was a prime target.

It was this confused situation which stimulated the rise of several Syrian usurpers in the 260s, including the unlikely emergence of Palmyra, which city led the Roman recovery by causing, or at least contributing to, the retreat of the Sassanid armies.[39] The overall result was the loss of some of Severus' more distant conquests, and a new Roman defence line drawn partway across Mesopotamia. For Syria this meant a partial return to its position as the Roman military base in the east. The Palmyran adventure did demonstrate that the Sassanid Empire could be as fragile as its Parthian predecessor, and the revival of Roman power under the Balkan emperors from 270 reestablished a more or less stable frontier.

The success of the new Persian Empire went further. The Roman defeat allowed the Sassanids to recover some of the lost Parthian territories in Mesopotamia, though in later wars in the 280s and 290s Roman armies were again able to march as far as Ctesiphon and to reannex Mesopotamia lands. More satisfying may well have been the disintegration of the Roman governing system, with usurpers all too common in Syria for thirty years after the sack of Antioch.[40] Antioch itself recovered, and as the number of emperors multiplied under the new system developed by Diocletian, the city became one of the imperial capitals.

For over three centuries, therefore, the Roman army in north Syria had been a constant presence, and it was an organisation whose members were numerous and were well paid. A garrison of 20,000 legionaries, and probably an equal number of auxiliary soldiers, was, apart from its security role, internal and external, a substantial economic resource for the region. Apart from the fact that soldiers received cash wages on a regular basis, they would also receive donatives at the accession of a new emperor and at various occasions during a reign, such as a victory, or the birth of an heir, or a birthday, and even at the emergence of a claimant such as Pescennius Niger. Many of them, no doubt – this is something which is little known in this region – retired in the province where they had been stationed, taking with them their substantial military pensions. Further, the army required great quantities of food, leather, wood, metal, woollen clothing, and manufactured goods, such as boots, helmets, armour, swords, and so on. Some of this was manufactured by the soldiers, but much was provided locally, and was paid for from central government funds.

It is clear from accounts of Syria, and from archaeological investigations, that in this period Syria enjoyed perhaps the most prosperous time in its history, and one of the major reasons was the presence of this large Roman garrison. This turned Syria into a major economic zone. Production of olive oil and wine expanded, as did the area of settlement, which steadily spread into the region between the old settled area and the desert throughout these centuries.[41] It was in this period that the 'dead cities' were developed – the earliest dates on the buildings are the early second century, but the greatest expansion came in the third[42] – and the greater cities all expanded in size and wealth, with major funds being spent on decorating cities and temples throughout the country. This wealth and prosperity, of course, made the region a major target for the Sassanid invaders, but as it turned out, the damage they perpetrated was not serious enough to do more than temporarily halt that prosperity; Syria remained a very wealthy region on into the Byzantine and Arab periods.

Syria was also a major trading region, importing goods from the empire on the west and from the lands of the east, and dispatching them onwards in both directions, and thereby generating large customs duties for the government.[43] Palmyra is probably the city whose increasing wealth is most obvious, if also the most fragile, rising from a desert camp in the first century BC to a major trading city in the first century AD,[44] but all the cities of Syria from Antioch to Gaza flourished, and one of the major causes of this prosperity was clearly the

spending power of the Roman army, both as an organisation, and in the form of its individual soldiers. This prosperity also meant that Syria was a major source of taxation for the empire, so that in many ways its taxation contributions were returned to it in the form of the military payments for goods and wages.

As a military base, as a boundary region, as a producer of essentials, and as a tax source, Syria was therefore a major element in the Roman Empire, but it was its military role which was the most visible and perhaps the most important of these. A garrison of four legions plus *auxilia* was in fact a relatively small military presence, given the size of the region, the importance of holding it, the responsibilities the army undertook, and the fact that the army could be used for internal security duties as well. It was, of course, not merely a by-product of the Roman military presence which brought local prosperity, but it perhaps increased it.

In military terms the pattern was set in the first century of Roman control, with expeditions by the Syrian army into Armenia and south into Palestine, the suppression of client kingdoms which had become troublesome, and Vespasian's interference in the politics of the centre. These were to remain the essential geographical roles of the army, though its later involvements in imperial affairs were less than successful; its (reinforced) expeditions into the east were also largely without result, except in that of Septimius Severus. Probably the progressive weakening and eventual collapse of Parthia would have been seen as a success – though only until the determination and power of the Sassanid kings became clear. The army's successes in the east probably had little direct effect on Syria, other than providing assistance towards increased prosperity, until the disasters of the Sassanid invasions. There is no evidence that Syrians enjoyed hosting the military presence in their land, though in the end they no doubt appreciated its defensive role, but the client kingdoms had been well supported by their people and their suppression was resented. The presence of a large army did not endear the imperial system to the Syrians, but it was central to the Syrian participation in the empire, in politics, in defence, in Parthian and Sassanid warfare, in wealth generation, and, as will be seen in the next chapter, in the participation of Syrians in garrisons in the rest of the empire.

Notes

1 F. Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 BC–A.D. 337*, Cambridge, MA 1993, 28–32.
2 Dio Cassius 48.24.8; H. C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago 1938, 101–118.
3 Dio Cassius 54.7–8; Suetonius, *Augustus* 21.
4 This is an interpretation I arrived at in my *Roman Conquests, Egypt and Judaea*, Barnsley 2012.
5 Debevoise, *Political History*, passim.
6 B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, rev. ed., Oxford 1992, argues that Rome was always the aggressive part of this duopoly, never Parthia, an interpretation not wholly to be agreed with.
7 R. D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Emesa', *ANRW* II 8, 1977, 198–219.
8 Tacitus, *Annals* 13.35; Dio Cassius 62.19; M.-L. Chaumont, 'L'Armenie entre Rome et Iran: I de l'avenement d'Auguste a l'avenement de Diocletien', *ANRW* II 9.1, 1978, 71–194.

9 Josephus, *BJ* 2.17–421 onwards.
10 Josephus, *BJ* 7.224; R. D. Sullivan, 'Dynasty of Emesa', and 'The Dynasty of Commagene', *ANRW* II 8, 1977, 732–798.
11 Tacitus, *Annals* 15.1–25.
12 Tacitus, *Histories* 2.82, 4.51; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 6.
13 Josephus, *BJ* 7.105, 6.356–357.
14 The date of the legion's arrival is not clear; maybe III *Gallica* was at Samosata first: Millar, *Roman Near East*, 89, 108.
15 Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 41–42.
16 The new legionary bases were at Melitene (now Malatya) for the legion XII *Fulminata*, and Satala, further north, for the legion XV *Apollinaris*.
17 I have discussed this crisis in *Nerva and the Roman Imperial Succession Crisis of AD 96–99*, London 2003; it must be admitted that the identity of the Syrian governor is not certain, but Curiatius Maternus seems the most likely possibility.
18 N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor, MI 2000, discusses recruitment locally, 114–120.
19 Dio Cassius 68.14.5; G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge, MA 1983; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 114–120; a small kingdom under the last descendant of Herod the Great, Agrippa II, seems to have been annexed about the year 100.
20 M. Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome*, Cambridge, MA 2001, 63–65.
21 J. Bennett, *Trajan, Optimus Princeps*, London 1997, 192–199.
22 Dio Cassius 68.29.1.
23 The Jewish rebellion: ibid. 201; E. Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, ed. G. Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, vol 1, Edinburgh 1973, 529–534; E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian*, Leiden 1981, 389 the 427; A. Fuks, 'Aspects of the Jewish Revolt in A.D. 115–117', *JRS* 51, 1961, 98–108.
24 E. M. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian*, Cambridge 1966, no. 1176; R. Syme, *Tacitus*, Oxford 1958, 240, note 7.
25 A factor ignored by Isaac, *Limits of Empire*.
26 Dio Cassius 71.1.3–31; *Suda*, SV Zeugma; HA, *Marcus* 8.6–9.5; *HA, Verus* 5.7–7.10; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 111–114; A. R. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*, London 1961, 171–176, 189–192; M. L. Astarita, *Avidio Cassio*, Roma 1983, 31–52.
27 A Parthian prince who had joined Trajan was placed as king of Osrhoene (Edessa) by Hadrian (Bennett, *Trajan*, 203).
28 *HA*, *Hadrian* 5.1–5 and 20.10–12; Cassius Dio 68.33.2; Bennett, *Trajan*, 203.
29 *HA*, *Verus* 4.4–10.6.
30 R. Syme, 'Governors dying in Syria', *ZPE* 41, 1981, 125–144.
31 Dio Cassius 71.2; Ammianus Marcellinus 23.6.23–24; *HA*, *Verus* 8.3–4 and *Antoninus* 8.6; Debevoise, *Political History*, 246–253; Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*, 161.
32 A. R. Birley, *Septimius Severus, the African Emperor*, 2nd ed., London 1988, chs 11 and 12.
33 *HA*, *Severus* 16.1–2; Herodian 39.2.9.11; Dio Cassius 75.9.1–4.
34 Dio Cassius 75.3.2–3; Birley, *African Emperor*, 114.
35 Birley, *African Emperor*, 134–135.
36 G. Tchalenko, *Villes Antique de la Syrie du Nord: Le Massif Belus a l'epoque romain*, 3 vols, Paris 1953–1958.
37 *HA*, 'Three Gordians' 23.5–6, 30; Ammianus Marcellinus 23.5.17; *Sybilline Oracle* 13.13–43; M. H. Dodgeon and S. N. C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, A.D. 226–263*, London 1991, 15–32.
38 *HA*, *Hadrian* 6.2.3–7.6; Zosimus 12.15.1–22; *HA*, *Severus Alexander* 55.1–3; other sources are gathered in Dodgeon and Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, A.D. 226–263*, 15–32.
39 Dodgeon and Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, A.D. 226–263*, 50–67.
40 Millar, *Roman Near East*, 161–173.

41 This is difficult to map or quantify; I used archaeological surveys to suggest expansion of settlement in the Hellenistic period in *Cities of Seleukid Syria*, Oxford 1990, chapter 6; Sartre, *Middle East*, discusses the problem of water provision, 217–2 to 4.

42 Tchalenko (note 36).

43 The circulation of tax revenue has been discussed by K. Hopkins, 'Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire, 200 BC–A.D. 400', *Journal of Roman Studies* 70, 1980, 101–125; the problem with his model is that in a land such as Syria much of the revenue would have gone into local expenditure without reaching Rome; see, for Syria specifically, Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities*, part 3.

44 Palmyra is much studied, but not a central issue in this study: Kevin Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London, 2003, 58–60; and Sartre, *Middle East*, passim.

4 The Roman army in Syria

The Roman army left large quantities of records which show the location of its units, the origin of its forces and in many cases the names of its soldiers. This wealth of material makes it the best resource for considering the participation of Syrians in the empire, alongside the records of devotion to the gods. These two are therefore the areas where we can best appreciate that participation. Earlier chapters have discussed the lack of enthusiasm for the empire evident among the Syrians of the wealthiest classes; the matter is somewhat different with the army. The last chapter examines the use to which the Roman forces in Syria were put; in this chapter I will be considering the situation of the various forces within Syria. The relationship between Syria and the Roman army, as argued in the previous chapter, was partly that of an occupying armed force of a substantial size, designed to hold Syria in the empire, but at the same time it was intended to act as a deterrent to any Parthian attack which might develop. Syria was the recruiting ground for a substantial number of Roman regiments, most of which were posted to other provinces, so this chapter is a necessary examination preliminary to the detailed examination of those overseas Syrian units in the next chapter.

The material for study is very largely epigraphic, and it is most convenient to organise it by reference to the Roman military formations, so that the first part of this chapter will consider the legions which were stationed in Syria, and the second part the *auxilia* which were there. This separation will be followed in the next chapter as well. The *auxilia* which were recruited in Syria are the more important of the two from the point of view of this study, since they were almost invariably posted elsewhere in the empire, while men recruited into the legions are much less visible in the records. The occupying forces in Syria, legions and *auxilia*, may be considered first, and though the *auxilia* which were recruited in Syria are the subject of the next chapter, it will not be possible to ignore the fact that the units stationed in Syria also certainly recruited troops locally to replace their constant losses from illness, from desertion, and from casualties. This replacement activity was so persistent that, over time, these units became composed largely of Syrian soldiers.

I. The legions in Syria

The legions stationed in Syria were mainly located at places where they could maintain control of the province, at least at first. Part of their function, to be sure, was to be on guard against an attack from outside, which in this case primarily meant Parthia, but most of the legionary strength was at first kept well back from the frontier. War with Parthia would not begin with a sudden raid on a fairly small scale, such as might be expected on the Rhine or the Danube, but would be preceded by a period of diplomatic tension, by the movement of armies, and by much diplomatic argument. The existence of a major Roman army in Syria (and more forces, including legions, were available in Asia Minor and later in Palestine, and ultimately from the legions on the European frontier) meant that any intended Parthian attack would have to be preceded by a major military build-up on the Parthian side, which could not possibly be kept secret. The Roman governor in Syria could not therefore be surprised by a Parthian attack – and in fact it was more likely that the governor himself would be the attacker when a war became inevitable, than the less prepared and badly organised Parthians.[1] One aspect of the practice of spreading the legions through the province, therefore, was probably in part to lessen the threat they seemed to pose to the Parthians – for stationing the legion on the frontier meant that a Roman attack could be launched without the preparations the Parthians had to undergo. It would also help to spread the load for acquiring supplies, which obviously had mainly to be procured locally.

This defensive role was only one aspect of the legions' role, and perhaps not the main one, at least at first. Because the legions were distributed inside the province, it becomes evident that their main task in the first century of Roman rule was to control the Syrian province and its people. The lack of interest in the Roman administration, which is apparent from the failure of Syrians to become senators or other administrators in the Roman system (discussed in Chapter 2), the existence of the client kingdoms which had attracted local loyalty for the previous century and more, and the continual turbulence in Judaea, were all factors which meant that the general Syrian population had to be regarded as at least antipathetic, and at worst actively and permanently hostile, to the Roman government. The legions were thus a permanent threat, not to the Parthians, but to Rome's Syrian subjects.

It must be said, however, that a very similar situation had existed in the preceding Seleukid kingdom, when every city was garrisoned by a detachment of royal troops, who were stationed in an acropolis from which they could dominate the city itself.[2] And yet rebellions by any of these cities had been vanishingly rare; the Seleukid kings were clearly prepared against a contingency which did not arise, largely because there was a clear and strong bond between the cities and their citizens and their founders, who were the Seleukid kings themselves. The Romans' apparent preparations to resist a Parthian attack would also seem to be a contingency which did not arise, even during Parthian Wars, with the possible exception of the legacy of Verus' War in the 160s. In Syria the Romans were seen

as conquerors and enemies, and their military precautions were clearly justified. When the Parthians got well inside Syria in 40–37 BC, they were welcomed as liberators; much later, something of the same reaction is visible when the Sassanids invaded in the third century. (Indeed, it may well be that the realisation of Syrian antipathy was one of the springs of Roman aggressiveness against the Parthians, as a means of driving the potential supporters of that Syrian antipathy further away.) At more or less regular intervals the army had to be deployed to suppress a problem within Syria or annex a client kingdom, and this continued from the time of Augustus to the reign of Trajan.

So the legions were stationed at strategic points inside Syria for the purpose of internal control. At first their stations were: Antioch, the great city and the centre of the provincial government; Laodikeia, another of the great cities, on the coast; and Raphanaea, astride the main route from the interior to the Phoenician coast. The only legion stationed on the frontier, from at latest AD 18, was at Seleukeia-Zeugma, which was the main crossing point on the Euphrates River; the legion at Zeugma had been moved forward from Cyrrhus. When a legion was stationed in Palestine, after AD 70 – an even more blatant case of establishing internal control – it was put at the ruins of Jerusalem; later legionary camps were at Lajjun ('legion') at the strategic Megiddo pass, and at Bostra in Nabataea, the eventual capital of the Nabataean kingdom and of the Arabian province which followed it. The practice of the Roman administration of stationing legions in recently conquered regions – Bostra, Samosata, Jerusalem – only reinforces the conclusion that the legions in Syria were positioned more for internal security reasons rather than to deter any foreign invasion; it is also a reminder that being included within the empire was not something altogether welcomed.[3]

The early stations of the legions changed after the crises and wars of the 60s and early 70s, during the Armenian war and the first Jewish revolt, which in turn were followed by the suppression by armed force of two of the larger client kingdoms. From the early 70s Zeugma and Raphanaea continued to hold a legion each – both were crucial communication nodes, and the latter was close to annexed Emesa – but there was a legion now at Jerusalem and another at Samosata after the annexation of Commagene – Samosata was another crossing point of the Euphrates – and the legion at Laodikeia moved away.

The shift of the legionary camps from one location to another does not necessarily mean that the old sites were wholly abandoned. In particular, when a legion moved its base from a city it is certain that troops were left there as a garrison. In the 50s, and in the 160s, one of the first measures taken to prepare for the invasion of Parthia was to pull all the soldiers in the cities out;[4] they had taken to frequenting the local bars, as soldiers do, and no doubt many more had found excuses to drift into the cities rather than stay at the camps, some of which were rather geographically isolated. Corbulo in preparation for his Armenian War in 58 took two legions into the mountains in winter; any men who survived were toughened up.[5] (The sight of idling soldiers in the cities might well have contributed the Syrian antipathy towards Rome.)

Legions could also be shifted to deal with, or perhaps anticipate, a crisis. The legion XII *Fulminata*, for example, was moved to Judaea in the 80s, specifically to Neapolis (Nablus) to the north of Jerusalem.[6] This coincides with a single diploma record of the positioning of six auxiliary regiments in Palestine which had been brought up from Egypt.[7] There are a number of hints of trouble or potential trouble in Judaea just at this time.[8] It is all very vague, and the hints may perhaps not implausibly be applied to the great Jewish uprising of 115–117, though in that case some other explanation for the arrival of the legion and *auxilia* in the 80s must be found. Judaea, after the war of 66–73, must have been a place which the Roman government watched very carefully, and in 80s one of the most accomplished Roman commanders of the time, Cn. Pompeius Longinus, was appointed governor.[9] It is not possible to put the hints together to make a convincing full-scale rebellion, so perhaps the Roman government reacted with speed to a potentially difficult and dangerous situation. The arrival of the legion and six *auxilia* – at least 8,000 men – to reinforce the legion and *auxilia* which were already in Palestine, could well have been enough to dampen down any problem.

The result of the changes in legionary bases was to shift the weight of the military presence towards the frontier, probably because the destruction of the Jewish power with the defeat of the revolt, and the suppression of the Emesan and Commagenean kingdoms (and the incorporation of their armies into the Roman forces), had lessened the possibility of further internal trouble in Syria. Legions at Jerusalem and Raphanaea and Samosata, however, were still clearly in suitable positions for internal security purposes, if needed, and in 66 it was the legion at Raphanaea which had been the first to march to suppress the Jewish uprising. The next change came after 106, when the Nabataean kingdom was annexed and the III *Cyrenaica* legion was brought in from Egypt and sent to occupy the capital at Bostra, which was obviously potentially hostile after the conquest, and which became the government centre for the new Arabian province. (One result of the shift of III *Cyrenaica* from Egypt to Arabia was to halve the legionary garrison of Egypt; this may well have been a contributory factor to the outbreak of the Jewish rebellion in Egypt in 115, along with the preoccupation of much of the Roman army in fighting the Parthians in Babylonia.)

From 106, therefore, the number of legions in the whole region increased to five, and a sixth arrived just before Trajan's Parthian War began in 115, and remained in Syria afterwards. This remained the position until Septimius Severus' Parthian War at the end of the century, when, after the annexations of conquered territory in Mesopotamia, the military weight again shifted eastwards, to camps at Singara, Sura, Oresa, and Constantina, east of the Euphrates, to hold the new lands; two legions remained in the south, at Jerusalem and Caparcotna. The only camp remaining from the original distribution of legions was at Raphanaea, which was at last abandoned in 219.[10]

The legions in these places usually remained in their stations for lengthy periods, but at each shake-up they were moved to a new camp. It is not always clear which legion was in which place in the early years, but the garrison of Syria

was composed of III *Gallica*, XII *Fulminata*, X *Fretensis*, and VI *Ferrata* from the start. Few changes in their stations happened until the 60s; the probable original stations and the later changes are noted in Table 4.1.

The most obvious thing to note is not merely the relative permanence of the stations of the legions, but the absolute permanence of the legions themselves in Syria. Of the four legions which were stationed in Syria in Augustus' reign, three were still there in the third century, and the replacement for XII *Fulminata*, IV *Scythica*, stayed also into the third (and fourth) century. These legions had become a Syrian army as much as units of the Roman army, and this needs to be taken into account in considering the politics of the army, particularly in the succession crises, as, for instance, in the reception of Elagabalus by III *Gallica* in 214 – this was a Syrian legion acclaiming a Syrian as emperor.[11]

Table 4.1 The stations of the legions

The legionary stations are listed from north to south in the four periods divided by the moments of crisis in the 60s, 106, and the 190s.

PLACE	*LEGION*
1. 40 BC–AD 62	
Cyrrhus	X *Fretensis* (moved to Zeugma in AD 18)
Antioch	III *Gallica*
Laodikeia	VI *Ferrata*
Raphanaea	XII *Fulminata*
2. AD 70–106	
Samosata	III *Gallica*
Zeugma	IV *Scythica*
Raphanaea	VI *Ferrata*
Jerusalem	X *Fretensis*
3. AD 106–198	
Samosata	II *Traiana*, from 112 to 120; XVI *Flavia*, from 120
Zeugma	IV *Scythica*
Raphanaea	III *Gallica*, to 219
Capacotna	VI *Ferrata*, from 120
Jerusalem	X *Fretensis*
Bostra	VI *Ferrata*, from 106 to 120; III *Cyrenaica*, from 120 to 195
4. After AD 198	
Singara	I *Parthica*
Sura	XVI *Flavia*
Oresa	IV *Scythica*
Constantina	III *Parthica*, to 219
Raphanaea	III *Gallica*, to 219
Damascus	III *Gallica*, from 219
Caparcotna	VI *Ferrata*
Jerusalem	X *Fretensis*

It may also be pointed out that legionaries did not remain in their camp all the time, but were sent out on detachment for a variety of purposes. The spread of inscriptions relating to IV *Scythica*, for example, reaches into Asia Minor, south into the Arabian province and Palestine, and east to Dura-Europos. The soldiers could be sent as garrisons, as builders (which was the case at Dura), to recruit soldiers, or to deal with trouble, and so on. The record of their travels and movements is certainly concentrated in north Syria, especially around the legion's camp at Seleukeia-Zeugma, but there is plenty of evidence of a much wider area of influence and activity.[12] This is also the case with other legions. It does not seem that they had particular territories of their own; this, of course, only confirms what is evident from the scanty records of recruitment.

We may therefore assume that, because of the relative permanence of the legionary stations, the personnel of these legions became steadily more Syrian. IV *Scythica*, for example, moved into Syria in 56/57 for Corbulo's Armenian War, and at that time its men were mainly from Italy, with some recruited from Gaul and Macedon. The legion suffered very badly in the Parthian ambush at Rhandeia in 62, and a vexillation was with XII *Fulminata* in the defeat in Judaea in 66.[13] As a result of these actions, the legion's losses were heavy in a relatively brief period of time, and so it is from that point on that its personnel became much more of Syrian origin, either recruited or drafted.

Though not so dramatic, the same process clearly happened with the other legions – XII *Fulminata* was involved in the same disasters as IV *Scythica*, and perhaps experienced the same sudden personnel changes, though the legion was moved out of Syria soon after and may not have had time to fully make up its losses from the Syrian population. Generally, the officers – the military tribunes and the legionary legates – were sent out from Italy. Centurions stayed for long periods with the legion, while the legates and tribunes stayed only for a few years, so it is probable that the centurions will have become largely Syrian as the time passed, since these men tended to be promoted from the ranks. The more senior officers were normally Latin-speaking Italians until well into the third century, and Latin was always the language of the legions, even when the majority the personnel did not have Latin as their native language. By 69 III *Gallica*, which arrived in Syria soon after the battle of Actium in 31 BC, had become so Syrianised that it collectively worshipped the Syrian sun god, as Tacitus, with a certain annoyed disdain, noted.[14]

A study has been made of the officers of the legion X *Fretensis* which was in north Syria until 66, then fought in the Jewish War and was posted to the ruins of Jerusalem from 70 onwards, remaining there until the later third century. Of those officers whose origin is known, none of the prefects or the military tribunes were from Syria, except for one tribune, M. Acilius Athenodorus, who came from the edge of Syria at Palmyra; he went on to command *cohors* I *Ulpia Petraeorum*; his full career lay within the second century. On the other hand, by the time of Nero, when the legion had been in Syria for a generation or more, three Syrians reached the centurionate:

A. Instuleius Tenax from Ascalon, L. Gerellanus Fronto from Heliopolis, and L. Valerius Celer, also from Heliopolis – two of these three therefore came from the only Latin colony in Syria. In the next half-century two more Syrians served as centurions in the legion: Tib. Clodius Ulpianus from Laodikeia and M. Septimius Magnus from Aradus. It is worth noting, for what it is worth, that all five men came from cities on or near the coast.[15] A similar survey of the officers of IV *Scythica* located one tribune from Berytus and one from Palmyra, both in the second century.[16]

III *Cyrenaica* had long been stationed at or near Alexandria in Egypt, and had adopted the worship of Jupiter of Ammon in the process, just as the Syrian legions adopted local manifestations of the sun god. It was moved to Arabia in 106 and stayed there, headquartered at Bostra, except for campaigns in Judaea and Mesopotamia, until the fourth century. A short list of soldiers of the legion comes from Alexandria. It is dated to the year 194, so, even though the legion had left Egypt many years before, it would seem to have maintained the connection with Egypt, though this particular date suggests that the men were in Egypt in connection with the succession crisis of 193–194. The governor of Syria, C. Pescennius Niger, had proclaimed himself emperor and had seized control of Egypt. All the six men on the list are from Syria – two from Caesaraea in Palestine, and one each from Samosata, Antioch, Hierapolis-Bambyke, and Philadelphia (Amman). Of these only the last came from Arabia, so this small sample suggests that the field of recruitment, for this legion at least, was the whole of Syria rather than merely its own Arabian province, and by contrast with the officers of X *Fretensis*, all but two of these men came from cities of the Syrian interior.[17] So we may assume that there was a steady uptake of Syrians (and Arabians) from all over the eastern region into all the local legions, beginning from the time each of them arrived in the province.[18] It remains to consider the precise evidence for this.

A legion comprised about 5000 men, each of whom served for twenty years, so on average each legion would need to recruit a minimum of 250 men each year to replace those who retired at the end of their time, and to maintain its numbers. This does not account for casualties and deserters and natural death, nor for an increased rate of retirement when extra recruits brought in after a disaster had served their time;[19] 250 is thus a minimum. This amounts to a take-up of a minimum of 1000 men who had to be recruited into the four Syrian legions every year, a number clearly within the capability of the Syrian province to supply, if men were willing to join – this requirement would increase, of course, as the number of legions increased, and greatly so in times of war. We hear of no unwillingness to join, though this is hardly conclusive since any evidence at all for recruitment is minimal. Certainly XII *Fulminata* and IV *Scythica* appear to have returned to their established strengths fairly quickly after the disasters of the early 60s.

Local recruitment was not the only recourse, of course, and it was always possible to recruit from other provinces, or to receive transfers from other legions, though this last was unlikely. But recruitment outside a province

would clearly be difficult, and if there were legions in that province there would be surely objections from those legions to such 'poaching'. At the same time, legions were moved between provinces for particular campaigns, while vexillations of the Syrian legions were frequently sent to other areas when wars were fought – at least two of the Syrian legions sent vexillations to fight in Trajan's First Dacian War – and in such a case they naturally recruited locals when and where they could wherever they were stationed, even temporarily – as XV *Apollinaris* did, and perhaps III *Augusta*, during Trajan's Parthian War. Yet the headquarters of the legion always stayed at the main camp in Syria, so any new recruits collected from outside the province were quickly Syrianised just as the legion had been. In the same way, other legions on assignment in Syria, or with vexillations there, would be able to pick up Syrian recruits while they were there.

There is a case of this in the III *Augusta* legion which was stationed for the whole of the imperial period, from Augustus' reign to the late third century, in North Africa. Mainly in the first half of the second century, a considerable number of the legionaries are recorded by name and origin in inscriptions found at the legion's camp at Lambaesis in Numidia; a few more records are undated or from the third century. Out of the 872 men named, seventy-seven are described as originating from various places in Syria. Two are simply described as Syrian ('*Surus*'); the rest come from most of the Syrian cities from Antioch and Cyrrhus and Zeugma in the north to Gaza in the south. The largest single contributions were from Antioch (eleven), Apamaea (eight), Sidon (ten), and Ptolemais-Ake (eight).[20]

III *Augusta* is recorded as having sent vexillations to wars outside Africa only three times, twice in the second century: to the Danube in Marcus' wars in the 160s,[21] and to the eastern frontier for Septimius' and Caracalla's Parthian Wars in 195–197 and 216.[22] It was, in a sense, isolated in its province, but it is known that III *Gallica* sent a detachment to Africa in 198 assist III *Augusta* in constructing a fort at Castellum Dimmidi on the Saharan Atlas, and that VI *Ferrata*, by then based at 'Legio' (Caparcotna) in Palestine, sent a vexillation to the same province in the 140s.[23] In other words, vexillations were not simply used for reinforcing a military operation – though one must wonder why detachments from Syrian legions were sent to build forts on the borders of the Sahara. There was a legion already there, but III *Augusta* could well have become over-stretched at the time, since it had responsibility for much of North Africa.

The explanation for the inclusion of a large group of Syrians in III *Augusta* must be either that the men were transferred into the legion from their parent units to reinforce it, which is a contingency which may have been encouraged by the obvious need of III *Augusta* to get help twice in the second century. Another obvious explanation is that the men were recruited while a vexillation of III *Augusta* was in Syria. This is not recorded in our sources, but the most likely time would be during Trajan's Parthian War.[24] This fits the apparent dating of the inscription, which is put at 'Hadrian-Antoninus' by Le Bohec (that is, between

117 and 161, rather a long period). He argues, as do others, for direct recruitment by a vexillation, but no vexillation from Africa present in Syria is recorded in Trajan's time – but then neither is the transfer of a considerable number of Syrians in the other direction. (If they had come from a legion in Syria, we might have expected the legion to record it, or the transferees to record their original unit, given the strong unit pride amongst legionaries.) A third explanation is that a deliberate recruiting drive was mounted in Syria to reinforce III *Augusta*; the numbers involved do not suggest that such recruitment was usual; some careful organisation is implied, probably with imperial encouragement. (Such an event would be drastically unpopular with the legions already in Syria.) The only evidence therefore is the presence of the men; any reasons we may produce are conjectures.

The practice of local recruitment 'on passage', so to say, by a legion or by a vexillation, as it sojourned briefly in Syria, can be confirmed in a way from elsewhere in the empire. XV *Apollinaris* was stationed at Carnuntum on the Danube until 62, then spent the years until 70 or 71 fighting in Corbulo's War in Armenia and then in the Judaean revolt before it returned to Carnuntum in 71 for the next forty-four years. Then it went back to the east for Trajan's Parthian War and was stationed for the rest of its existence at Satala in Cappadocia. It left behind at Carnuntum evidence of its having recruited men in Syria between 62 and 70 in the form of the names of eight soldiers whose Syrian origin was recorded in inscriptions, usually their epitaphs. All the men came from cities in north and central Syria – from Antioch (two), Cyrrhus (two), from Chalcis, Hierapolis, and Berytus (two).[25] There is no other possible occasion for these men to have been recruited into the legion than in that brief period of eastern service (unless they were volunteers in Syria who deliberately chose to serve in this particular legion on the Danube, which is perhaps unlikely).[26] Eight men is not a large sample, but considering the relatively brief stay of the legion in the east, as well as the high selectivity of epitaphs, it is a helpful confirmation of the practice of local recruiting whilst on campaign.

It is worth lingering for a moment over this group, since their epitaphs supply rather more information than the records of the III *Augusta* men from Lambaesis. One man served for only three years before dying, but the rest all served ten or more years, and two of them more than twenty years. Only one is recorded as a veteran – P. Sestius Vale(ns) from Cyrrhus ('*Kyr*'), whose epitaph was put up by his friend, a private soldier, apparently still serving. The others would therefore seem to have been still serving when they died. Two were officers: the *armorum custos* M. Iulius Clemens from Chalcis whose tomb was put up by the *signifer* Antonius Firmus and the *cornicularius* Sex. Trebonius Proculus, who both came from Berytus.[27] None of these inscriptions can be dated, though if these men were recruited in Syria between 62 and 70, they were all, except the first, of the late first century, probably in the 90s. They were also, be it noted, necessarily Roman citizens, since legionary recruitment at this period was restricted to citizens; the provenance of non-imperial *nomina* (Sestius, Trebonius) also implies inherited citizenship.[28]

There are also six inscriptions recording other men who came from Syria and who served in the II *Adiutrix* legion at Aquincum (Budapest). In this case the only visit this legion made to Syria was during Trajan's Parthian War, but all the inscriptions seem to be much later. Only one is given an approximate date by its publisher – Severan – but this is of an officer, the tribune C. Valerius Papirianus, who came from Capitolias in the Decapolis; the tomb was set up by his sons, identified as *equites Romanus*.[29] Since officers could be posted to any legion, his service was not necessarily the result of recruitment in the east, but we may add him (and his sons) to the tally of *equites* from Syria noted in Chapter 2. Two men of the same legion were buried at Intercisa in Pannonia Inferior, not far from Aquincum, and had served in an auxiliary cohort which was stationed there, after their service in the legion. Both had typically Syrian names – Monimos and Malic(h)ia(nus), and Monimus' wife came from Emesa.[30] These men had evidently chosen to be buried amongst their former comrades of the *cohors Hemesenorum* in Intercisa, a Syrian-origin unit. (The units stationed at Intercisa will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.)

The other two men are both described as veterans and so were not actively serving at the time of their deaths. M. Herrenius Pudens lived for seventy-eight years and came from Apamaea;[31] Aurelius Domitianus was from Hierapolis (spelled as 'Erapuli') and was defined as '*cives Surus*'; he died aged ninety, or so he claimed.[32] It is just possible that these men joined the legion in Syria as young men when the legion was in the east in 114–116, though Malichianus' *nomen* Aurelius implies birth in the third century, after the award of citizenship to all in 212. Domitianus was buried, and had presumably lived, at Brigetio, and Pudens at Dene Pentele; neither of these places, both on the Danube, was very far from the legion's permanent base at Aquincum.

Collecting together other examples of Syrian legionaries serving (and dying) in other parts of the empire, the predominance of the cities in the north of the province as their origins is also confirmed, as one would expect from the stations of the legions. Twenty more Syrians are recorded in various legions and places, usually on their epitaphs. They come from a wide spread of Syrian cities, from Antioch in the north to Ascalon in the south, and they were recorded as serving in thirteen different legions, being buried (or at least recorded) from Amman in the Arabian province to the German frontier, and at dates which range from the reign of Augustus to the mid-third century. Many of these men were centurions, or low-ranking officers, which meant that they could afford a well-made epitaph. It may also be that the legion they claimed to have served in was merely their last posting.

There is therefore no obvious pattern in these, though a fair number of the men served in Rome, two as Praetorians,[33] one in an Urban cohort,[34] seven as *equites singulares*,[35] and three in the fleet.[36] The underlying pattern, however, is that the empire was itself the unit for these men. They were all Syrians, and most of them served and died in provinces far from their origins. Seven were commemorated on the frontier, many in Rome. One centurion came from Edessa and died at Salonae in Dalmatia, having served in the VII legion;[37] Edessa,

however, was technically outside the empire at the period of his service (he died in the first half of the first century AD). The place which produced most of these men was Berytus-Heliopolis, from which men went to serve in IV *Scythica* before it arrived in Syria, II *Traiana* at Rome, and IV *Flavia Gordiana*; the fourth of these men was simply labelled as *primus pilus*.[38] This spread of places is typical of the group as a whole, as are their resting places – at Philippopolis in Thrace, Nemausus in Gaul, and Rome.[39]

It is clear from this survey that Syria was regarded by the Roman military authorities as a source of supplementary manpower for the legions, though it was not a region of primary recruitment – no new legions were raised there, for example, even though those legions which were based in Syria must have become very largely Syrian in personnel after a couple of generations. Those who left, or were posted out of, Syria might go anywhere in the empire, though those we know of were clearly keen to record their Syrian origins. This is not unusual in the empire, however, and it is not possible to impute any particular loyalty to Syria in these records; recalling and recording a man's origin was part of his identity, but did not necessarily imply nostalgia for the homeland or loyalty towards it. The main impression from these particular records is that they were quite ordinary, that the men who were recorded had integrated fully into the life of the military of the empire. This again is not in the least surprising, since this was one of the essential bases of an efficient army – unit loyalty replacing any loyalty to a particular locality.

II. The auxilia in Syria

Besides the legions, Syria was also garrisoned by a considerable number of auxiliary regiments. In numbers of units the *auxilia* far outnumbered the legions, but in numbers of soldiers the two sets were probably more or less equal, and it seems that in many cases the intention was that the number of legionaries in a province would more or less determine the number of auxiliary soldiers. For Syria, however the *auxilia* are much less visible than the legions, with the result that they are also much less studied. With four legions in garrison in the province for much of the time, one must expect somewhere in the region of thirty *auxilia* to be stationed in the province.

The main source for identifying Syria's *auxilia* are a series of discharge diplomas, which are in fact only rarely found in Syria. A soldier on his discharge would be given this diploma, in which the fact of his discharge would be recorded, and incidentally a series of other items of information, including other auxiliary regiments in a province at the time, dated by the serving consuls. The list of units therefore provides a snapshot of the military situation in a province at the moment of the soldier's discharge, and a sequence of these diplomas can provide an outline history of the state of the garrison over perhaps two centuries; the name of the soldier might also be informative. Since the diploma was also a proof of the retired soldier's citizenship, they ceased to be produced after 212, and in fact very few were produced after 180.

The earliest diploma relevant to Syria is dated to the year 56, but is incomplete, recording only three units; the latest, also incomplete, is from 186, which also, as it happens, recorded only three units. Between them there are two diplomas which seem to have complete lists of the Syrian units, one of the year 88, and one of 156/157 though it is not necessarily the case that these lists give the names of all the units forming the Syrian garrison. A third source is an inscription giving a list of units under a tribune's command which was active in Verus' Parthian War in 163. There is, however, a good overlap between the several diplomas, including most of those which are incomplete. This provides a generally acceptable list of *auxilia* in Syria from 88 to the 160s. The first six diplomas, dated 86, 88 (two), 91 (two), and 93 are concentrated in a short period, and so provide the basic listing; later diplomas modify and augment that picture. (See Tables 4.2 and 4.3.)

These diplomas can also be supplemented by inscriptions, though these have their own difficulties. The basic difficulty with the diplomas is the absence of any found in Syria itself, which is both puzzling and awkward. Their absence from Syria might imply that no retired soldiers stayed on in the region, which is extremely unlikely. We know, for example, that retired soldiers were settled in several places in Syria, at Berytus by Augustus, and at Ptolemais-Ake by Vespasian. It is more probable that the value of the diplomas as historical sources has

Table 4.2 The *auxilia* of Syria – *alae*

This list is based on the occurrence of units named in discharge diplomas; the earliest diploma is from 86 and the latest from 186.

UNIT NAME	*EARLIEST RECORD*	*LATEST RECORD*
Veterana Gallorum et Thracum	88	134/154
Gallorum et Thracum	88	134/154
Gallorum et Thracum Antiana	88	156/157
Veterana Gaetulicum	86 (only record)	
I Thracum Mauretana	86 (only record)	
II Pannoniorum	88	105
III Augusta Thracum	88	105
Phrygum	88	144
Gemina Sebastena	88	134/154
Praetoria singularium	88	144
Thracum Herculiana	156/157	163
I Ulpia singularium	156/157 (only record)	
I Ulpia dromadariorum	156/157 (only record)	
Flavia Agrippiniana	129	163
Augusta Syriaca	163 (only record)	
Praetoriae	163 (only record)	
Augusta Xoilani	129 (only record)	

Table 4.3 The *auxilia* in Syria – *cohortes*

UNIT NAME	*EARLIEST RECORD*	*LATEST RECORD*
I Augusta Lusitanorum	86 (only record)	
I Thracum	86 (only record)	
II Thracum	86 (only record)	
II Cantabrorum	86 (only record)	
Ex Aegypto	86 (only record)	
Ex Aegypto	86 (only record)	
I Flavia c.R.	88	163
I Thracum milliaria	88 (only record)	
I Lucensium	88	163
I Ascalonitanorum	88	163
I Sebastena	88	93
I Ituraeorum	88	156/157
I Numidarum	88 (only record)	
II Italica c.R.	88	156/157
II Classica	88	156/157
III Augusta Thracum	88	156/157
III Thracum Syriaca	88	93
IV Bracaraugustanorum	88	186
IV Thracum Syriaca	88	93
IV Callaecorum Lucensium	88	163
Augusta Pannonicorum	88	156/157
Musulamiorum	88	91
II Thracum c.R.	88	163
I Gaetulorum	88	186
II Thracum Syriaca	91	163
IV Thracum Syriaca	91 (only record)	
I Augusta Thracum	88 (only record)	
I Hispanorum	105 (only record)	
I Thebanorum	105 (only record)	
VII Gallorum	134/154	156/157
I Ulpia Petraeorum	129	144
II Gemina Ligurum et Corsorum	129	144
II Ulpia eq. sag. c.R.	129	163
V Ulpia Petreorum	129	163
I Flavia Agrippiniana eq.	144 (only record)	
III Ulpia Paphlagonum	144	163
V Ulpia Galatorum	149/161 (only record)	

(*Continued*)

Table 4.3 (Continued)

UNIT NAME	*EARLIEST RECORD*	*LATEST RECORD*
VI Petreorum	149/161 (only record)	
I Flavia Chalcidenorum	144	163
I Claudia Sugambrorum	156/157	163
II Paphlagonum	156/157 (only record)	
I Ulpia Dacorum	129	163
II Ulpia Paphlagorum	163 (only record)	
I Ulpia sag	163	186
II equitata	163 (only record)	
I Damascenorum	186 (only record)	
II Ulpia Galatorum	186 (only record)	

not been recognised locally and any which have been found were discarded. In fact, it is also the case that there are also very few from Cappadocia to the north, though five are now known, having been discovered fairly recently; once the value of these records is understood it seems that they will be found.

The stations of most of these regiments are not known. Some clues can be derived from some inscriptions and perhaps from excavation, though this can be hazardous, and the excavation of Roman forts has not been a local archaeological priority in any of the modern countries of the Syrian region. As an example of the difficulties, the epitaphs of five soldiers have been found at Beroia. They come from legions IV *Scythica* and VII, the *cohors* IV *Praetoriae* (an *eques*), and two are of veterans of legion VIII *Augusta* and *ala* I *veterana*.[40] Because several units are represented, none of these inscriptions can safely be used to identify the city as the posting for any of the units. Further, only one auxiliary fort has been identified in (modern) Syria, at Tell el-Hajj on the Euphrates, and no particular unit can be identified there.[41] Along the Arabian frontier a little more information has been detected, though, since this did not become a Roman concern until after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in 106, this does not get us very far. So without substantial body of evidence, it is pointless to try to locate any one unit.

Ten other *auxilia* in Syria have been counted, but the source of several of them is the *Notitia Dignitatum*, dated to c. AD 400, and none of those units is recorded earlier. They were, presumably, regiments originating in the reorganisation of the army which took place in the late third century. All are *alae*, reflecting the new emphasis on cavalry warfare in the late empire. Two units, from their names, date from the reign of the Emperor Philip the Arab, the *ala Celerum Philippiana* and the *ala nova firma caraphractaria Philippiana*, and three more apparently date from the reign of the Emperor Valens (364–378) – *ala* I *Valentiana*, II *felix Valentiana*, and II *felix Valentiniana*. Both of these emperors faced serious military problems and could be expected to actively recruit new units. The stations of these units

are known from their notice in the *Notitia*, but this takes us well outside the time frame of this study, and there is no guarantee that the units stationed in one place at the time of the *Notitia* had been there in the third century. On the other hand, it is unlikely that any new forts in the Arabian Desert had been needed, and their stations were probably forts which had been in use, perhaps by other units, in the second and third centuries.

Two units are recorded in inscriptions from the fort at Medain Saleh, in the Hejaz, both from the second century. *Ala dromadariorum* may be one of the former Nabataean forces incorporated at the annexation in 106; *ala Gaetulorum* is known from the diplomas. Other forts with known units were at Admartha, Shahba (Plilippopolis – Emperor Philip's home village which he raised to city status), Bostra (the governing centre of the Arabian province), and near the Wadi Mujib. But there were at least a dozen other forts, including two legionary fortresses to which legions were moved in the later third century.

It has also been suggested that the Syrian *auxilia* were largely stationed in the cities, but this is a fairly desperate theory, based on an absence of evidence for the units elsewhere.[42] This is certainly a possible distribution, and would fit with the Syrian dislike of being Roman and therefore of the army needing to keep a substantial garrison in the country to oversee the larger centres of population, but it is not an idea worth relying on without evidence. Detailed excavation and examination of the forts is needed for a solution to this issue.

By the time of the annexation of Nabataea in 106 the rest of Syria had been Roman for at least forty years, in the case of the last annexed kingdoms in 72, or 170 years, in the case of north Syria. By this time, most Syrians, at least those between Berytus and the Euphrates, were surely reconciled to being Roman subjects, even if they still did not particularly like it, nor take any real part in its governance. And in the next years after that annexation in 106 it must have become increasingly clear that the emperor was planning a new war in Parthia. New units arrived from distant provinces, legions were transferred, and recruiting took place. And one of the necessary tasks was to ensure that the desert frontier was properly guarded.

If, therefore, there had not been a line of forts protecting the settled frontier and the cities from attacks out of the desert, either by Arabs chancing their arms or by raiding Parthians, then it is likely that such a frontier would be organised and manned in advance of the new war.[43] This is certainly what took place along the Arabian frontier in the aftermath of the annexation of Nabataea. The Nabataeans had controlled and guarded their trading and transport routes and their villages, and perhaps had little trouble with the Arabs, being Arabs themselves. A constant infiltration from the desert into the wealthier and more comfortable and wetter lands is to be expected, and can be seen to have been happening for thousands of years. The Romans, however, saw this movement as dangerous to their security, and set up defences against it. No doubt also the desert Arabs partook of the same hostility to Rome as did the other inhabitants of Syria.

The defence of Arabia consisted of a series of forts linked by organised roads. Whereas the Nabataeans had defended the roads, and perhaps the traffic along

those roads, the Romans pushed forward and built their forts east of the main route, which was the old King's Highway, renamed the *Via Nova Traiana*. In the end there were forts every fifteen or twenty kilometres along the route. These were all occupied by Roman soldiers; this was one of the tasks of the *auxilia*.

This frontier, sometimes called the Arabian *limes*, has been well studied, but that part of it further north (north of Damascus, that is) has not. One part has been surveyed and its forts listed in detail: this is the *Strata Diocletiana*, which was a fortified road linking Damascus with Palmyra and on to Sura on the Euphrates, organised as a whole in the time of Diocletian, as its name indicates. Before then the line of defence was less advanced into the desert, and less systematised, the forts lying closer to the settled lands of Syria, with the desert area patrolled by the Palmyrenes, who operated, like the Nabataeans, by guarding their traffic rather than their desert territory. Independent or quasi-independent for much of the first century AD, Palmyra was brought under steadily more detailed Roman control, particularly in Trajan's time when its forces took an active part in the Parthian War. After its 'rebellion' in the 260s, the city was crushed by the Emperor Aurelian in 272–273, and then a new and purely Roman defence line was required. So the *Strata Diocletiana* replaced whatever had been organised in the first century and by Trajan.

The number of forts involved was no doubt considerable, but the point here is that they all needed to be garrisoned, and this would absorb several thousands of soldiers; a small fort held perhaps fifty men, but some were larger and would need more than that. In the absence of written sources, however, it would only be possible to determine the origins of the garrisons by the excavation of the several forts (and it may not be possible even then if no inscriptions were found). Surveys, which operate by locating a site and collecting pottery fragments from the surface, are not necessarily fully informative. In at least one case, when a survey of this type was followed by excavation, the survey produced only Nabataean pottery, but the excavation showed that the fort had been occupied by Roman soldiers later.[44] Similarly a large number of sites of military type in the modern republic of Syria has long been known, primarily by the archaeological activities of the French during the mandate between the two world wars, but to know that a site exists is not to know what it was for or when it was occupied.

The ending of the practice of issuing diplomas, as a result of the universal award of citizenship from 212, and even before, means that a record of *auxilia* in Syria in the third century is even more incomplete than for earlier periods. For the Arabian province seven *auxilia* are known, three of which are already known from earlier diplomas. Most of these *auxilia* are only known from being noted in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but at least here we have precise locations – though this is not to say, of course, that this had been the station of any particular unit earlier.

(In the early third century evidence from some units emerges at Dura-Europus, but scarcely any of them are to be found in the diploma lists. Indeed, Dura-Europus cannot be included in a discussion of the Roman army in Syria, and similarly Palmyra is very difficult to include as a constituent of ancient Syria. Both cities were substantially closer geographically to Babylonia and

Mesopotamia than to Syria. Further, since the records are fragmentary and very largely confined to a single unit – *cohors* XX *Palmyrenorum* – and expire with the regiment at the capture of Dura in 256 it is not worth including a discussion.[45])

In summary, it is not possible to determine where more than a few of the individual auxiliary regiments were stationed at any one time, still less to decide if and when they moved around. It is possible for the century 88–163 to provide an approximate list of all the regiments within Syria, but this is the best that can be done.

Notes

1 B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, rev. ed., Oxford 1992.
2 J. D. Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, Oxford 1990.
3 For the legionary stations generally see N. Pollard and J. Berry, *The Complete Roman Legions*, London 2011, and Y. L. Bohec (ed.), *Les Legions du Haut Empire*, Lyon 2000; the movements of the legions the new stations are not always clear and rarely well dated.
4 Tacitus, *Annals* 13.34; Fronto, *Ad Veram* 2.1–2.
5 Tacitus, *Annals* 13.35–36.
6 A. S. Hall, 'The XII Fulminata, Countermarks, Emblems, and Movements under Trajan or Hadrian', in S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia*, BAR 156, Oxford, 1983, 41–46.
7 *CIL* XVI, 33.
8 Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 352–353.
9 E. Dabrowa, *Legio X Fretensis, a Prosopographical Study of the Officers (I – III c. A.D.)*, Historia Einzelschriften 66, Stuttgart 1993, 32–33.
10 I use the conclusions of J. A. Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions*, BAR S 1458, Oxford 2005, though any such conclusions are always tentative and subject to later research.
11 Herodian 5.3–4; Elagabalus's mother's offer of an extra donative presumably also helped the soldiers to their decision to support him.
12 For full details, including a map, see M. A. Speidel, 'Legio IIII *Scythica*, Its Movements and Men', in D. Kennedy (ed.), *The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*, Portsmouth, RI 1998, 163–203.
13 M. A. Speidel, 'Legio IV *Scythica*', in L. Bohec (ed.), *Les legions de Rome*, 309–315.
14 Tacitus, *Histories* 3.24–25.
15 Dabrowa, *Legio X Fretensis*, 73–74, 85, 86–87, 89, 95.
16 Speidel, 'Legio IIII *Scythica*'.
17 *CIL* III, supp. 1, 6580.
18 It was also the case that recruits to the eastern legions could arrive from other parts of the empire: see J. Mann, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate*, London 1983, where in Table 25 (covering the period until AD 300) two recruits from Italy and nine from Greece and Asia Minor are listed, while ninteen came from Syria and neighbouring provinces; given the numbers of men in the legions of these three centuries, these are not figures worth relying on for any conclusions, except to conclude that recruitment to the Syrian legions was evidently empire-wide.
19 In 117, in Egypt, at the end of the furious Jewish revolt in that country, one legion recruited 116 men from Asia Minor, spread through only six of its centuries: R. O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus*, American Philological Association Monograph 26, Cleveland, 1971, no. 74; a legion had sixty centuries, suggesting a requirement at that time of over 1000 men, no doubt as a result of the casualties suffered during the Jewish rebellion.

20 To the list in Y. Le Bohec, 'Les Syrians dans l'Afrique Romaine: civils ou militaire?', *Carthage* 21, 1982, 81–92 (also in ib., *L'Armee Romaine en Afrique et en Gaul*, MAVORS XIV, Stuttgart 2007, 453–506), I have added the Syrians mentioned in *AE* 1989, 875, which were omitted in Le Bohec's article in *Antiquites Afriques* 25, 1989, in which there are also improved readings of some names. See also Y. Le Bohec, *La Troisieme Legion Auguste*, Paris 1989, a fantastically detailed survey of all the sources on the legion, its personnel, and its activities; see also Mann, *Legionary Recruitment*, Table 1.

21 *CIL* VIII, 619, an epitaph of an officer who had commanded the vexillation.

22 *CIL* VIII, 2564 and *AE* 1895, 204.

23 III *Gallica*: G.-Ch. Picard, *Castellum Dimmidi*, 1947, nos. 12–6; VI *Ferrata*: *CIL* VIII, 2490, 10230; E. W. B. Fentress, *Numidia and the Roman Army*, BAR S 53, Oxford 1979, 87–89.

24 Mann, *Legionary Recruitment*, 13, assumes there was a vexillation in Syria in 114–117 from the fact of the Syrian recruits (and is followed by Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities*, 117), but one would wish for a better source for this.

25 *AE* 1929, 205–209, 220; *AE* 1934, 267; *AE* 1937, 174.

26 *AE* 2009, 1051; there is also a record of a family from Judaea who followed the legion to Carnuntum after the Jewish War, and so in the 70s.

27 That the two men were from Berytus makes it likely that Clemens' origin was Chalcis in the Bekaa, close to Berytus, rather than Chalcis in north Syria.

28 This may be considered to contradict the conclusions arrived earlier about the reluctance of Syrians to take up Roman citizenship; but it may be noted that most of these recruits came from places with Roman legionary garrisons, which would have higher than normal concentration of citizens in the civilian settlements attached. It is also noticeable that the names of the soldiers are not of imperial provenance but more likely of the Republican period.

29 *AE* 2001, 1691 a and b.

30 *RIU* 195 (Monimus) and 1189, 151, no. 2; and *AE* 1992, 1456 (Malic(h)ia(nus)).

31 *AE* 1906, 108.

32 *CIL* III, supp I, 11076.

33 *CIL* VI, 2637; Moretti 590.

34 *CIL* VI, 2910.

35 *CIL* VI, 3197, 3251, 32795, 3922/33009; *Epigraphica* 13, 1951, 112, no. 54 and 131, no. 1126; S. Panciera, *RAC* 50, 1974, 237 no. 12.

36 *CIL* VI, 3114, 3138, 32776; living in Rome, of course, would imply that the men were well-to-do; it is also well-researched epigraphic source.

37 *AE* 1991, 1790.

38 Respectively: *AE* 2001, 1759; *Epigraphica* 1, 1939, 145 no. 2; J. Hajjar, *Le Triade d'Heliopolis-Baalbek*, Leiden 1977, 290, 285.

39 The others referred to here are *AE* 1918, 288; *AE* 1937, 97; *AE* 2001, 1691; *CIL* III, supp. 1, 6596, 6599, 10920; *CIL* XIII, 11811; *BRGK* 58, 1977, 86; *BGU* IV, 1089; *CCID* 138; *I Byzantion* 122.

40 *IGLS* 178–181; *CIL* III, 191.

41 P. Bridel and R. A. Stucky, 'Tell el-Hajj, place forte du limes de l'Euphrate', in J. D. Margueron (ed.), *Le Moyen Euphrate: Zone de contacte et d'echanges*, London 1977, 349–353.

42 S. Gregory, *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier*, 3 vols, Amsterdam 1995–1997, 1.58.

43 This information is derived from S. T. Parker, *Romans and Saracens, a History of the Arabian Frontier*, American Philological Association, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1986, and D. Kennedy and D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air*, London 1990.

44 Parker, *Romans and Saracens*, 117.

45 These records, largely on papyrus, are published in Fink, *Roman Military Records*.

5 Syrians in the Roman army

In contrast to the clear unwillingness of most Syrians to involve themselves in Roman affairs, the country was the source of a very large number of auxiliary units with a wide range of capabilities, particularly specialising in archers. The recruitment of these units would have substantially reduced both the numbers of men who were available for legionary recruitment, but also those who were available for rebellion, should such occur.[1] And, unlike many of those Syrians who joined the legions, the auxiliaries were almost invariably dispatched at once to other provinces. I shall consider first those from three annexed client kingdoms (and the Parthian regiments) (Part I), then those whose titles imply that their origins were in individual cities (Part II), then the others whose titles are without any precise description other than 'Syrian' (Part III), and finally some odd units which might or might not be Syrian in origin (Part IV). It will be seen that the progressive Roman takeover of the province, in particular the annexations of the client kingdoms and the occasion of the Jewish Revolt of 66–73, has a great bearing on the embodiment of these auxiliary regiments.

I. Auxiliary regiments from the client kingdoms

Ituraea

It seems that the earliest of the Syrian auxiliary units were recruited amongst the Ituraeans. That priority cannot be wholly verified. No doubt many individual Syrians were recruited into the Roman forces during the civil wars of 49–30 BC, and may have stayed in the army in the subsequent peace, but it is only with Octavian/Augustus that we can see a semblance of order and permanence among auxiliary regiments. From the definitive conquest of Syria in 30 BC onwards Ituraea was subject to constant Roman pressure for a long period, beginning as soon as Octavian gained control of the region, when he removed it from Cleopatra's control. He installed Zenodoros, a surviving member of the Ituraean dynasty descended from Menneas, as ruler, though he only lasted for a fairly short time.[2] We do know of at least one Ituraean cohort which was stationed on the southern Egyptian frontier in the 20s BC, under the command of a man called Iunius (or Iulius) Sabinus, and it is the theory here adopted that

the annexation of a Syrian kingdom was accompanied by the annexation of the kingdom's army and its incorporation in the Roman forces, and after inspection and winnowing the troops were constituted as *auxilia* in the Roman army – and at once posted out of Syria.

Sabinus carved a poem of his own composition at Philae, in which he claimed to have commanded his '*Ityraid corta*' (which is best interpreted as a local Greco-Egyptian lapicide's understanding of 'Ituraean cohort').[3] The occasion was when the southern Egyptian frontier at Philae was attacked by forces from the kingdom of Kush to the south. Another inscription, from Dakka (ancient Pselchis), somewhat farther south, refers to a *cohors Facundi* in AD 28, and has been supposed to refer to this same unit; they were certainly at the same place in that year, but two separate records name them separately, so it is unlikely that they were the same unit.[4] No clear date for the poem at Philae can be made, but Sabinus' reference to a war at Syene (Aswan) can only be to the attack on that place by Kushites in the 20s BC, between the prefectures of C. Cornelius Gallus and P. Petronius. The area of Pselchis was part of the Nile Valley south of Aswan which was reclaimed by the Romans after the war.[5]

The link between *cohors Sabini* and the well-attested *cohors* II *Ituraeorum* which was stationed at Syene in AD 28 (as *cohors Facundi* was at Pselchis in that year) is similarly not certain, but looks rather stronger.[6] The reasonable supposition is that this cohort was recruited in the 20s BC on Zenodoros' deposition. It could well have been part of Zenodoros' army, taken over entirely, after his removal sometime between his installation by Octavian in 30 BC and his death at Antioch in 20. The troops were thus reorganised, no doubt re-equipped, and then posted to Egypt to get them away from their homeland at a time when there was serious fighting in Upper Egypt. Since Zenodoros had used his forces as extorters of high taxes and as collaborators with bandits, the removal of them from their homeland may well have been equally welcome to his former subjects.

The existence of *cohors* II in Egypt argues the existence also of a *cohors* I, recruited at the same time (which will be discussed later). These two units, each of 480 soldiers, would thus remove up to a thousand young men from Ituraea, significantly reducing the country's ability to cause trouble. Ituraea had been a menace to all its neighbours for a century before Augustus, so those neighbours would have been as pleased with their disappearance as Zenodoros' former subjects.

Much of Ituraea was ruled as a client kingdom until the late first century AD, at first until the 20s BC under the family descended from Menneas, the founder of the local dynasty (which ended with Zenodoros), then under a succession of rulers descended from Herod the Great, though there were gaps between the kings when the area was directly subjected to the Roman governors. The precise dating of its final annexation into the Syrian province is not clear, but this probably took place some time after the end of the Jewish revolt of 66–73; if Agrippa II was the king, the final annexation probably took place on his death in 92. It was a region whose political organisation was repeatedly adjusted, in part because the Romans perceived it as strategically unusually important. In 15 BC the main

Ituraean shrine at Baalbek became part of the Roman *colonia* of Berytos, and was officially renamed as Heliopolis, and some of the later kings were referred to as 'of Chalcis', referring to Chalcis in the southern part of the Bekaa Valley, which rather suggests that the kingdom had been further subdivided, and was being gradually reduced in size with each change in its government.

It is assumed here that while the client kingdoms existed, they were not areas in which Roman recruitment took place, though this is by no means necessarily the case – we have the example of a man from Edessa in the kingdom of Osrhoene, who joined the legion VII.[7] The kings of these client states all had substantial armies under their control, to operate as border protection for the province, and partly for internal security (brigandage again). These armies were available for use in emergencies by Roman commanders, who could call them up as needed. Every client kingdom in Syria produced forces to assist the Roman army in suppressing the Jewish revolt in 66.[8] If such forces were to be useful to the Roman governor in an emergency they necessarily had to be fully manned, well armed, efficient, and for the men of the kingdom to be subject to recruitment into the Roman forces on a serious scale would undermine that usefulness. Recruiting Syrians into a Roman auxiliary unit therefore would only take place on a systematic scale once the area came under direct Roman rule, though individuals could surely leave home and join the Roman army even under the kings. The armies of the kingdoms were not simply available for use in an emergency, but could be incorporated wholesale into the Roman army when the kingdom was annexed. This would explain the early appearance of the Ituraean cohort in Augustus' reign, for Zenodoros was deposed after a fairly short reign, in the 20s BC, and his kingdom annexed briefly; the later intermittent appearance of other Ituraean units can also be similarly accounted for, as being incorporated into the Roman forces when the kingdom was annexed, as it was on several later occasions, either temporarily or permanently.

From the Ituraeans there were recruited altogether one *ala* (cavalry unit) and five infantry cohorts. The cohort in southern Egypt was numbered II *Ituraeorum*, and is securely recorded in AD 28 and later. If so, then by that numbering at least two regiments had been recruited at that time, that is, between 30 and 20 BC.

Cohors II *Ituraeorum* was accompanied in Egypt by *cohors* III *Ituraeorum*, but this unit is not recorded until it is mentioned on a military discharge diploma in AD 83 (along with *cohors* II);[9] its prefect M. Porcius Marcellus is noted at Thebes in a *graffito* on the tomb of Rameses IV, but this is only dated vaguely to the first or second century.[10] Other Egyptian records concerning both units show that they were located in the south of the country for most of their careers, with individuals and detachments serving elsewhere at times. II *Ituraeorum* was defined also as *equitata* (mounted infantry) and remained in Egypt, according to various records, until at least 224; it is also mentioned as still in the province in the *Notitia Dignitatum* at the end of the fourth century.[11] III *Ituraeorum* is mentioned less often; it certainly lasted until 243/244, but it is not listed in the *Notitia*,[12] so it presumably vanished along with many other regiments in the third-century military changes.

If *cohortes* II and III can be located for the whole period of their existence, the question is, what of I *Ituraeorum*? This is complicated since there were three Ituraean cohorts, all with the numeral I, as well as the *ala*, which was also I, and it is not always easy to distinguish them from one another. It seems likely that the original *cohors* I *Ituraeorum* was the one which was awarded the title *Augusta*, for this would put its origin before AD 14,[13] and we know that *cohors* II was in existence by that time. (*Cohors* III seems to be of a later origin.) *Cohors* I *Augusta* was also *sagittaria*, a corps of archers. Of the others numbered I, one was *cohors* I *Ituraeorum sagittariorum c.R.* (that is, it had been granted collective Roman citizenship for some exceptional military deed), and the other was simply *cohors* I *Ituraeorum*. This last is recorded at Mogontiacum in Germania Superior in Tiberius' reign where four of its soldiers were buried,[14] but I *Ituraeorum sagittariorum c.R.* is only noted from 109, when it was stationed in Mauretania Tingitana.[15]

The *ala* I *Augusta Ituraeorum* was also *sagittariorum* – and so it was a unit of mounted archers – and was, judging from its raising in Augustus' reign, perhaps intended as a counter to the Parthian method of warfare, or an imitation of it. If it was raised along with the first two Ituraean cohorts, in the first years after Actium, this was before the Parthian peace treaty negotiated by Augustus in 20 BC, and so at a time when a new Parthian War seemed very likely. It had been moved to Pannonia by Tiberius' reign, and appears later to have been stationed at Arrabona on the Danube, for epitaphs of members of the unit dating to the reigns of Nero and Vespasian to have been found at that camp. One epitaph also comes from Brigetio, a short distance away, dating from the Flavian period, and another from Domitian's reign from Intercisa further east on the Danube.[16] The regiment is also recorded in Pannonia Inferior (still farther east than Arrabona therefore). Whether the spread of epitaphs means the regiment was kept moving, or just that its men died outside the main camp, is not known. In 110, however, it was moved into the new province of Dacia, where it was in 114 and remained until at least 124. Then by 135 it had been moved back to Pannonia Inferior and remained there for at least the next decade and a half.[17] This unit was thus well recorded in a variety of ways Augustus' reign to that of Hadrian.

Cohors I *Ituraeorum* was, as noted above, at Mogontiacum on the Rhine in Tiberius' reign. Its career is less clear than the cavalry unit which was raised with it, but we have three more locations for it, which show that it was kept on the move, or perhaps on campaign. In 88 a discharge diploma lists it in Syria, and others also in 91 and 93; then, in 109–110, diplomas place it in Dacia as another part of that conquered land's garrison, and a quarter of a century later it was part of the expeditionary force commanded by T. Flavius Arrianus in Cappadocia.[18] But then we lose sight of it.

For the other Ituraean cohorts numbered I, there are a good number of records, all discharge diplomas, but nothing is dated before the Flavian period, though *cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum*, from its name, would seem to have been recruited (and honoured) in Augustus' reign. The earliest record of the regiment otherwise is in a diploma of 80 from Pannonia; another of 98 was for a soldier of the unit who came originally from Cyrrhus in Syria, which would

put his recruitment in 73. The regiment was still in Pannonia in 102, but had moved to Dacia by 109, and remained there until at least 152; by 157 it was back in Pannonia Inferior.[19] The other *cohors I (Ituraeorum sagittarii c.R.)* is recorded in Mauretania Tingitana in 103/104 and 109, and a succession of later diplomas from there shows that it remained in that province until at least 162/163.[20]

There is also a *cohors* I *milliaria Ituraeorum*, which appears on two discharge diplomas, one dated to 88 from Thrace and another dated 99 from Cappadocia-and-Galatia. The unit is not known anywhere else or at any other time, but these two diplomas have only been discovered recently (published in 2014 and 2015). They come from provinces from which there have been relatively few diplomas reported – that from Cappadocia is only the fifth diploma to be found from that province. It would seem likely, therefore, that the regiment was a fairly recently constituted force in 88, perhaps formed after the extinction of the kingdom after 70; the unit may not have lasted for very long after its appearance in 99. That it was *milliaria* is rather a surprise, given the smaller sizes of other Ituraean regiments.[21]

The tentative sequence for the recruiting of these regiments is, therefore:

Octavian/Augustus – *ala* I *Augusta Ituraeorum*
cohors I *Ituraeorum*
cohors II *Ituraeorum*
cohors I *Ituraeorum Augusta sagittariorum*

Probably Augustus, possibly later – III *Ituraeorum equitata*

Flavian – *cohors* I *Ituraeorum sagittariorum c.R.*
cohors I *milliaria Ituraeorum.*

A limited amount of information can be deduced from the names of men who are recorded as being members of these units. The four men of *cohors* I *Ituraeorum* who were buried at Mogontiacum in Tiberius' reign were all, from their names, Syrians. One man had the name Caius (spelled *Caeus*), but his father was Hanelus, and his brother, who buried him, was Iamlicus (i.e., Iamblichos),[22] which was a common name in the Emesan royal family, and probably in Syria generally; the others (one name is incomplete) were Monimus son of Ierobaelus ('Hiero-baal'bail – 'holy god') and Sibbaeus son of Eronis, all good Syrian names.[23] The men of the *ala* I *Augusta* who were buried in Pannonia were similarly mainly Syrian in name or parentage: Acabonius son of Ababunis; Bagrathes son of Regebalus; Zanis, a decurion; two brothers Barama and Bricbelus, sons of Beliabas; Ianlumalicus son of Blacconis; and Thaemus son of Horatius. One more was Albanus son of Balavus, and came from 'Betavos', which seems to be Batavia (unless it was a mis-hearing of Berytus). There are some Latin and Greek names on this list, Eronis, Albanus, Horatius – but most of the names are clearly Syrian.[24] It may be concluded that these men were recruited in Ituraea or perhaps in other parts of Syria, and that they moved to the northern frontier with the cohort and the *ala*.

The appearance of Albanus from Batavia, however, suggest that local recruitment in the west supplemented the Ituraean regiments. There are also three records which might bear on the question of whether the Ituraean units continued to recruit in their homeland after they had been posted elsewhere, but little can be deduced with any finality on this. A papyrus of AD 105 from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt lists the names of six *tirones* – new recruits – of III *Ituraeorum*, who were under the command of *cornicularius* Avidius Arrianus. All are listed as having Roman citizen names of the most bland type, though it seems unlikely that six Roman citizens would be enlisted into an obscure auxiliary unit in rural Egypt.[25] The region had received veterans as colonists, and these men were probably sons of such men.

Other examples are single soldiers. There is M. Spedius Corbulo, whose discharge diploma from *cohors* II *Ituraeorum*, dated 24 September 105, lists a number of units in Syria in that same year, most of which had been sent from Egypt, possibly in preparation for the annexation of Nabataea which took place the next year. He is described as from Hippos, which is more likely to be the Hippos in the Decapolis rather than the town of that name in Africa.[26] The man's name is hardly Syrian, nor is it Greek, and if his home town was Hippos, he is more likely to have been Greek than anything else. The discharge diploma for P. Insteius, son of Agrippa, of *cohors* I *Ituraeorum Augusta*, dated 98, states that he was from Cyrrhus,[27] another Greek city, like Hippos; together these two suggest that people from non-Ituraean Syria were joining Ituraean regiments, just as were Egyptians from the Fayum, since neither of these men came from Ituraea itself. This is as far as we can go in this instance, though it may be noted that one new Ituraean regiment was raised late in the first century AD, and this would tend to mop up potential recruits from the homeland; maybe recruiting was being deliberately spread to other parts of Syria to fill up the numbers; Albanus shows that Syria was not the only source.

The existence of a '*cohors* VII *Ituraeorum*' was detected on an inscription from Thebes in Egypt, but a closer reading showed that the number is actually III. Similarly, the apparent detection of a V *Ituraeorum* on a diploma from Karanis of 156/161 is now seen to be a misreading. It therefore follows that Cheesman's suggestion, which was based on the supposed existence of VII *Ituraeorum* on the inscription, that there were regiments numbered IV, V, and VI, can be dismissed.[28] The highest number was III – but then there were, of course, one cavalry and four infantry regiments numbered I, to make a total of seven regiments.

Each of these cohorts was originally recruited to a normal strength of 480 men, at least theoretically, and the *ala* to a strength of about 500.[29] If these figures were reached in each case, then the earliest units, recruited in Augustus' reign, will have taken almost 2500 young adult men out of Ituraea and sent them off to Egypt and the Rhine; later tranches took another 1500 men, but not all at once. They came from a territory which was relatively poor and mountainous, so the subtraction of such a considerable number of young fit men from its population would clearly have a serious effect, both on the work force and on the subsequent size of the population, though the main reasons were for them to serve

as a worthwhile military reinforcement, and to reduce the potential trouble in Ituraea. The regiments which were constituted later, in the Flavian period, and the apparently continuing refreshment of existing regiments from the homeland, would have continued the drain of manpower.

Commagene

The kingdom of Commagene was one of the earliest units to detach itself from the Syrian part of the Seleukid kingdom, dating its independence from 163 BC, though it was probably not really free of Seleukid domination for another half a century. It occupied a position which became strategically important once the Romans and Parthians squared up to each other on opposite sides of the Euphrates River. It controlled that stretch of the river where it cuts through the Taurus Mountains, and at some point in the confusion of the final disintegration of the Seleukid kingdom the Commagenean kings gained control of the cities of Seleukeia-Zeugma and Europos (the former Carchemish), lower down the Euphrates, and of Doliche in the Syrian hills. The first of these cities was the normal river crossing point, and the only place where there was a bridge. This increased the kingdom's strategic importance still further, for it thereby controlled the whole of the Euphrates Valley from the borders of the Syrian Desert into the Armenian mountains. In addition, the royal seat of the kingdom was at Samosata, a huge steep-sided tell, which when fortified and properly manned was well-nigh impregnable. It survived a Roman siege for several months in 38 BC, until Mark Antony proposed acceptable terms which left the kingdom in existence and with its original boundaries intact, though this treaty made it a Roman client. By that time it had been a political fixture in the Near East for over a century, and could be considered a permanent power, if a small one.

The kingdom survived until AD 18, when Tiberius decreed its annexation. At that point, or possibly earlier, the legion X *Fretensis* moved forward and occupied Zeugma, the vital Euphrates bridge-town, and Zeugma and Europos and Doliche became part of the Syrian province (though the transfer of the cities into the province probably happened earlier). The Emperor Gaius restored the reduced kingdom for his friend King Antiochos IV, who had lived in Rome since his kingdom became part of the province, but Vespasian annexed it once more in 72. The king retired to a life of ease at Rome; his sons put up a fight but only briefly; then they took refuge in Parthia, but soon took up residence in Rome, a more comforting place to live.[30] A grandson of the last king became Roman consul in 109 but the family disappears after that.[31]

The land of Commagene, therefore, was directly ruled by Rome between AD 18 and 38, and then permanently after 72. Before 18 and between 38 and 72 the kings controlled a substantial army, which was used by the Roman governors, notably in the Jewish revolt of AD 66–70 when King Antiochos IV provided a force of 3000 men to assist the Roman forces.[32] So when each of the two annexations took place Rome also annexed the Commagenean armies. In the second annexation, the conquering governor's forces were held up for a day in battle

before the king's and his sons' nerves broke and all three fled – but, note, the Commagenean army had not been defeated; it was the royal family which deserted their own forces, which had fought a successful defensive battle until then.

Out of these annexed armies Rome acquired one cavalry unit, *ala Commagenorum*, and three infantry cohorts, *cohors* I and II *Flavia Commagenorum*, both of which were *equitata* and the second also *sagittaria*, and VI *Commagenorum equitata*. There is no physical record of cohorts numbered III, IV, and V. That might be inferred,[33] but there is no need to do so. '*Cohors* VI' is certainly correct, and is well documented; probably three other, but non-Commagenean, *auxilia*, were recruited at about the same time and these received the 'missing' numerals.

These Commagenean units were all horsed. The *ala*, of course, was cavalry, but all three of the cohorts were *equitata*, that is, mounted infantry or light cavalry. This is perhaps not really surprising in that Commagene was a state which was both heavily influenced by, and threatened by, the nearby presence of the Parthians, whose primary method of warfare was to use mounted archers. Parthian, or rather Iranian, cultural/religious influences are notoriously visible in the great royal monument of Antiochos IV on Nemrut Dag.

The history of the kingdom from which the soldiers came is reflected in the dates of the units' appearance in the record as Roman forces, and in their names. The *ala Commagenorum* is first recorded, though not well, in an Egypt unit strength report of 48 AD.[34] Its precise location at the time is not known, but in 83 it was at Coptos in the south,[35] and there are also three dedications by unit members from Talmis, also in the south, though these are undated.[36] The first of these records indicates therefore that the unit had been recruited in the first period of the kingdom's annexation by Rome (after AD 18). This crisis had been caused by a dispute within the kingdom between rich and poor,[37] and the removal of a major part of the old army may have seemed a particularly good idea to the Romans, who after the annexation had to cope with the problem – the numerous poor had opposed that annexation. The unit is recorded in Noricum in 106, and was back in Egypt, it seems, in 165.[38]

The other Commagenean units, all mounted cohorts, were clearly recruited later than the *ala*. Two of them were *Flavia* indicating that they were recruited and embodied by one of the Flavian emperors; a set of discharge diplomas which were all issued in 100 puts the original recruitment of the dischargees in 75. No doubt, given that the second annexation took place in 72 at Vespasian's instigation, and in the face of armed resistance, the definitive removal of the local army was considered necessary once more, and its personnel were reconstituted as members of Roman army units. Similarly, the repositioning of the III *Gallica* legion from Antioch to Samosata – this was presumably the invading force – was the military occupation of a conquered land, at least at first, and the move was therefore only partly due to the need to face Parthia. The third cohort, VI *Commagenorum*, is first recorded in Africa in 127, and was still there in 198.[39] Its late appearance, in a province where the Roman army produced copious records, and its curious number, suggests that it had been recruited and embodied relatively recently at the date of that record, perhaps at the time of Trajan's Parthian War.

One other Commagenean unit is apparently recorded – apart from the non-existing III, IV, and V. If VI was recruited much later than I and II it was probably numbered in a different sequence – one might suggest as a preliminary to one of Trajan's campaigns. Another 'ghost' unit appears to be *ala* I *Flavia Commagenorum*, apparently recorded on a diploma from Dacia and dated 109,[40] but this seems to be a confused record which mixed up *cohors* I and the *ala Commagenorum*. *Cohors* I was certainly *Flavia Commagenorum*, but being *equitata* it might have been mistakenly noted as a purely cavalry unit, and therefore counted as *ala*. It is not the original *ala Commagenorum*, which was never *Flavia* and does not seem to have been numbered, nor was it ever stationed in Dacia. *Cohortes* I and II were in Moesia until the conquest of Dacia, and *cohors* II was in Dacia in 110, the year after the diploma naming the ghost *ala*. Without further evidence it is best to assume a mistake by the military bureaucrat who drew up the document; it is not the only such mistake.

There are plenty of uncertainties with these 'missing' and 'ghost' units, and it is always possible that one or more may turn up somewhere, but the number of new units which have appeared since Cheesman's monograph is fairly small. For the present, therefore, we must only look at those units which are certain to have existed when considering the history of Commagene's contribution to Roman auxiliary power.

The sequence of the origin of the Commagenean regiments, therefore, is as follows:

Between 18 and 38 – *ala Commagenorum*

Flavian, after 72 – *cohors* I *Flavia Commagenorum equitata*
cohors II *Flavia Commagenorum equitata sagittariorum*

Perhaps Trajan, by 117 – *cohors* VI *Commagenorum equitata*.

The regiments were, as was normal in the Roman system, quickly moved out of their homelands to distant provinces. *Ala Commagenorum*, as already noted, went to Egypt before 48 and was there until at least 83, when it appears to have been stationed in the south. By 96/106 it had been moved to Noricum,[41] which must have been a distinct climatic shock for a group of soldiers used to Egypt's heat and dust. The frontier problems of Domitian's and Trajan's reigns are sufficient to explain this move. It was still in Noricum in the 130s,[42] but it may have been moved back to Egypt later. An ostraka functioning as a receipt for purchases names the unit as the recipient, and is dated 165.[43] This is said to be a 'certain' reading.[44] Unless we assume a mistake in either the writing or the reading, or in the clerk's naming of the unit, the only explanations are that the unit in Noricum was still buying supplies in Egypt half a century and more after it had left, which is highly unlikely, or that the unit had returned to Egypt.[45] This last is perhaps the best of the possible explanations, unless a bureaucratic mistake is assumed (not unlikely, of course). The continued existence of the regiment may

be inferred from the fact that it was awarded the title *Antoniniana* by Caracalla between 211 and 217, but where it was at that time is not known.[46]

However, there is another aspect. The camp which the *ala* occupied in Noricum, at Tulln (Bavaria), was one of at least three forts founded at the same time in the area. To the west two forts held the *cohors* I *Asturum* and, a little later, the *cohors* I *Aelia Brittonum*. The Commagenean *ala* and the Asturian cohort both gave their names to their forts (Commagena and Astura), which implies that they were established on unoccupied territory, or at least at an unoccupied site, and that these units remained in place for an appreciable length of time. Commagena and Astura retained those names to the end of the empire, and the former is mentioned by that name in the life of St Severin late in the fifth century, and even in the *Niebelungenlied* (as Attila's wedding and death place),[47] though the Commagenean regiment itself does not seem to have survived the empire's mid-third-century troubles. It seems curious that a regiment which is assumed to have only occupied the place for a fairly short time could find itself so well commemorated, but if it was the founder and first occupier of the fort this might help explain it. The same happened at the next fort, Astura, named for the Spanish cohort.[48] Note also that this part of the Danube was being fortified by units brought from the ends of the empire – Egypt (or Syria), Spain, and Britain – suggesting that the strain on the manpower of the Rhenish and Danubian armies was very great at that time.

It is possible that the regiment occupied the Egyptian and Norican posts at the same time, if it was split. The Egyptian post may have been maintained by a detachment, while the Norican, on a difficult frontier, would really require a unit at full, or near-full, strength. Possibly the move to Noricum was originally intended to be only short term, but, as such things do, turned out to be permanent. Both parts, in their different posts, would then no doubt recruit from local resources; the Egyptian section, however, is not well recorded after 165, and may have been absorbed into another regiment. But without clear evidence, this can only be speculation.

The first infantry units from Commagene, *cohortes* I and II *Flavia Commagenorum*, were also on the Danube frontier by the reign of Domitian, and quite possibly they had been posted there by his father immediately after their enrolment in or after 72. *Cohors* I went to Moesia Inferior, where it is recorded in several discharge diplomas between 92 and 111;[49] a decade or so later it was in Dacia Superior, and is noted there in a string of other diplomas until 179.[50] Several undated bricks and tiles stamped with the unit's name have been found at Drajna de Sus[51] and Voineste[52] – the former in association with other bricks with the stamps of the legion V *Macedonica*, which was in Dacia from 167 until the final Roman withdrawal in 274. This would suggest what is in any case likely, that I *Commagenorum* stayed in Dacia throughout the Danubian province's existence.

Cohors II *Flavia Commagenorum* had a similar history. It was in Moesia Superior by 96, and stayed there until 110 at least.[53] It was thus, like its sister unit, probably posted to the Danube frontier soon after its formation (in, presumably, 72 or soon after). It was moved into Dacia by about 110 – it is no longer listed in

Moesian diplomas from 111/112[54] – and was stationed probably at Micia in Dacia Superior, where three altars were set up by the cohort or its members, and where tiles stamped with its name have also been found.[55] The record of the unit in Dacia goes down to 157,[56] and then at Turnu Severin until twenty years later,[57] though there is no reason to suppose that this was the end of its service in Dacia.

Most of the monuments and records which survive – diplomas, altars, bricks, tiles – give no information about members of these units, but one item has thirteen names. It was a dedication from Talmis in Egypt by men of the *ala Commagenorum*, almost all of whom had Greek or Latin names (Bassus, Antiochus, Sabinus, and so on). The inscription is not dated, but the names do suggest that the men were a long way from being Syrians by origin. Another inscription from Egypt names a *hippeos* (presumably a tribune) called Apollonius Marios and his wife, Tiberiana; he would seem to be Greek, at least in speech.[58] Only one inscription, from Conslaga in Dacia, names people who seem to be Commagenean in origin. M. Iulius Tertullus was a veteran of the cohort, and so had the Roman citizen nomenclature, which effectively hides his origin – though Tertullus is a name common in the eastern provinces. The two men who are named as having erected Tertullus' grave stele were Mithridates, 'a soldier from Commagene', which is clear enough, and Balares, who had a Syrian-seeming name.[59]

The final unit, *cohors* VI *Commagenorum*, has perhaps the best, most convincing attestation, for its performance in training and exercises was commented on by the Emperor Hadrian in 128 in his speech at Lambaesis in Africa, which was then inscribed on a great stele. A recent study of the emperor's words and a reconstruction of the fragments by M. P. Speidel, gives an interesting view of the purpose and tactics of an *equitata* cohort. Hadrian was judicious in his comments, mixing praise and admonitions. It is clear that the training he observed was mainly on horseback, and the weapons used included slings and javelins – throwing weapons – and spears, which can be both thrown and wielded. Comparison with an *ala* which had performed just before the cohort indicated that the former were clearly more disciplined in their parading, though that is not necessarily an indication of better fighting conduct.[60]

The first record of the cohort is in fact from the year before, in 127, in several discharge certificates, and it is recorded also in a diploma of the next year.[61] The dating implies that these dischargees had been recruited in 102, in time for Trajan's first Dacian War, though, of course, the unit could have been formed earlier, perhaps recruited up the strength over several years. After these notices it is noted just once more, still in Africa, in 198 in two records: at a fort forming part of the '*fossatum Africae*', the frontier region separating the desert and the sown, which was designed to control the movements of the nomads – just the sort of region where mounted infantry would be most useful. The fort was at Djebel Mellah, described as '*custor de la montagne de sel*' by the French investigator Baradez.[62] The other record, from Mesarfelta, a fort of the same system just to the west, shows that the unit was constructing an amphitheatre, probably for conducting military

equine exercises and training. This is close to Henchir Sellaouine, where a dedication to Herakles by the legion VI *Ferrata* was found. This dedication, by such a unit, of course, indicates that it was being used as an imperial police force to control the desert tribes.[63] Epigraphic records name several of the officers of the regiment in Africa, but only one can be seen to be Syrian: T. Aelius Iuvenalis, prefect of the cohort, was buried by his 'friend and compatriot' Q. Aelius Rufinus Polianus of Batna(e), a Syrian town near Hierapolis/Bambyke; the date is put no closer than the second half of the second century AD; both men were therefore probably Roman citizens by inheritance from their fathers or grandfathers, who had their citizenships from Hadrian; this rather implies that those forebears were of assistance to Hadrian during his governorship of Syria in the time of Trajan's Parthian War, possibly as members of this same regiment.[64]

The several Commagenean units were therefore well scattered (and well separated), to Africa, Egypt, Noricum, and Dacia; in this they reflect the similar distribution of the Ituraeans. This is only due, of course, to Roman military requirements in manning the frontier – apart from the evident determination to remove such units from their home territories. It is a pity that no further names of the men are known other than those on the inscription from Talmis in Egypt and the few in Dacia and Africa; one might expect that, like the two men who put up the epitaph for the veteran in Dacia, other soldiers would better betray their Syrian origins. The lack of personnel names makes it difficult to discern if these regiments received reinforcements from Syria when on their distant posts. The bland Greek and Roman names of the men listed on the Talmis record cannot be used to prove anything about their origins. The few Syrians noted elsewhere are clear evidence of soldiers recruited from there into those units, but more are needed to demonstrate a constant process of reinforcement. The matter must be left undecided.

Emesa

Emesa was an Iron Age town of no obvious size or importance which appears to have faded to little or nothing, perhaps no more than a village on its tell by the Persian period. By the beginning of the first century BC it had revived sufficiently to be the seat of a new monarchy, in part centred on the local sun god, which was also called El. It was at the Syrian end of the trading route from Palmyra and points east, and from there a further route led on to the Mediterranean coast at Tripolis and Arados. For several centuries Emesa and Palmyra rose and flourished together. The monarchy survived until Vespasian's clear-out of the client kingdoms in 72, but the city continued to grow and became one of the main cities of Syria as a result. It was also the home of the core female members of the Severan dynasty, of Iulia Domna and her relatives, including the Emperor Elagabalus. Elagabalus was the hereditary priest of the sun temple in the city, and the temple had also flourished with the city. After Rome, the city survived the Arab conquest and has retained its Syrian importance to this day, as the city of Homs.

The annexation of the city to the Syrian province in 72 is the obvious occasion for the formation of regiments out of the monarchy's army, though at least one man had joined another regiment, Marcus, son of Goras, who rose to be *signifier* in the *cohors* I *Ascalonitarum*.[65] The army had been mobilised to assist the Roman campaign against the Jewish revolt of 66–70,[66] along with those of other Syrian kingdoms. No doubt it was in part the realisation by Vespasian of the combined military strength of these client states – at least potentially – together with the powerful resistance shown by the Jewish rebels which had stimulated the annexations; Vespasian clearly did not see the usefulness of these private armies to Rome as worth the monarchies' continuation. However, if the two cohorts – *cohors* I and II *Hemesenorum* – recruited from the city and its territory were really formed in the 70s, it is remarkable that neither appears in any record at all for the next century. This evidential silence, of course, is hardly unprecedented, though the period from, say, 80, to, say, 160, was prolific in the production of military epigraphy. When it does become noticed *cohors* I is unusually busy in its production of inscriptions, and it seems very strange that it should only get this epigraphic enthusiasm after the regiment had already existed for a century, and when the habit generally was beginning to fade.

This therefore may well be the exception among the Syrian kingdoms, in that in this case the army of the kings was not incorporated into the Roman forces. A variety of explanations could be conjectured – that the royal army was not worth recruiting, that the king made an agreement with Rome that his men should not serve, that the men were distributed into other regiments, or into the legions, that the new regiments were hidden under non-Emesene names – but without evidence such an exercise would be futile. (The fact that a military campaign had to be mounted to bring the kingdom within the Roman province might suggest that the royal army had put up some effective resistance, and so its manpower was therefore distributed – hence the *signifer* Marcus being assigned to *cohors* I *Ascalonitarum*.) What remains are the records of later regiments with the Emesan name.

Cohors I arrived at what proved to be its permanent base in Pannonia Inferior in about 180, and there are four inscriptions from the site dating to the reign of Commodus (180–192);[67] more appear under the succeeding emperors until the 250s. The base was Intercisa, now Dunaujvaros on the Danube, about seventy-five kilometres south of the legionary base of II *Adiutrix* at Aquincum (Budapest). A short time before the regiment arrived the fort had been destroyed by a raid by the Iazyges from across the river; it was then rebuilt by the regiment which occupied it until *cohors* I *Hemesenorum* arrived.[68]

The precise date of that arrival is not totally clear, but c.180 is probably near enough. This in turn means that, although the regiment is not attested until shortly after that date,[69] it did exist before then. When it arrived it was already a fully formed force, *milliaria*, *sagittaria*, and *equitata*, and it had moved from its original home in Syria, where it was formed and recruited, to the Danube in Pannonia. It therefore had already existed during the reign of Commodus' father, Marcus Aurelius, for at least some years before 180, and so its origin lay at some

point between 72 and some years before 180. Various guesses have been made, suggesting the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian, or Marcus,[70] but no precise period can be proclaimed as correct, or is even generally accepted. It is certainly very strange that such a vigorous regiment of 1000 soldiers had not had its existence recorded by leaving plenty of evidence, either in the written record or by way of inscriptions; if it had been stationed for long at a base somewhere else one might expect such evidence to have been found. It is possible that it did exist but under a different name. There were plenty of other Syrian regiments whose existence after about 150 is difficult to discern.

One man's career, however, does provide evidence for the existence of the regiment before 180. P. Aelius Proculinus had risen to the post of *primus pilus* in the regiment; since this appears to be his first posting it would seem probable that he had spent some years in the regiment (ten years? twelve?) before reaching that rank. He then moved on to the legion II *Adiutrix* at Aquincum; from there he went to Rome to be the centurion of one of the Urban Cohorts in the city; finally he became centurion of the *cohors* VII of the Praetorian Guard. He clearly regarded Intercisa as his hometown, however, and he was buried there, presumably having returned to the town on his retirement. We do not know exactly when he died, but his career, given in chronological order, can be used to help explain *cohors Hemesenorum*'s earlier life, though first some history of the Danube frontier is needed.[71]

The purpose of the transfer of the regiment to the Danube is to be found in the previous history of the region, and this in turn may give another clue to the previous history of the regiment. The raid which destroyed the fort at Intercisa before the regiment arrived had been made by the Iazyges. It signified a new and dangerous development on that frontier, for the Iazyges were horse-nomads living and roaming in the grasslands between the Danube River and the Carpathian Mountains, and these warriors, as Romans on the eastern frontier could attest, were best combated by archers, especially mounted archers. And a regiment of a thousand trained Roman mounted archers such as I *Hemesenorum* was a formidable force.

The centurion Proculinus had fought in the Dacian and Carpian Wars, according to his epitaph, which were two of those which occurred on the northern frontier during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and which are generally subsumed under the overall name of the 'Marcomannic War'; the trouble in Dacia began in 167, with a raid on the Dacian gold mines, and then continued for several years. Given that Proculinus' career had begun in the *Hemesenorum* regiment, it served in those wars in the 160s during Marcus' reign, so it was in existence then. It may be supposed that it originated before those Northern Wars, perhaps during the Parthian War of Lucius Verus in the 160s, when it could have been recruited for the emergency in Syria. The legion *II Adiutrix*, Proculinus' legion after his service in the auxiliary unit, had served in the east in that war and was then transferred back to the Danube once it was over.[72] The connection between the cohort and the legion seems to have been close, and perhaps dated from their joint period in Syria, and in Pannonia they were neighbours.

That close connection is shown not merely by Proculinus' career, but by the careers of others. M. Aurelius Malci[ ]ia[ ] (apparently a Syrian name) moved from the legion to be *signifer* in the cohort,[73] and T. Claudius Procus of the legion put up an altar for the genius of the cohort;[74] two soldiers of the legion were among four men who attended to the burial of a centurion of the cohort.[75] A soldier of the cohort and two veterans of the legion are recorded, together with their wives and daughters, in a single inscription[76] – all these records are from the cohort's time at Intercisa. The Syrian connection seems all the more interesting in that the legion was part of Septimius Severus' army which marched on Rome in 193.

Taking all the indications together, plus the negative 'evidence' of a lack of any evidence at all from, at the earliest, before the Parthian War of Lucius Verus, it seems best to assign the regiment's origin to that war, followed by its transfer to Dacia for the war there, and then to Pannonia, perhaps along with the legion with which it was associated, in the 170s.

Once at Intercisa *cohors* I *Hemesenorum* occupied the existing stone fort built by its predecessor, and over the next twenty years at least four temples were built in the camp by or for the regiment. It received honorary titles from successive emperors – *Antoniniana* from Caracalla, *Maximiniana* from Maximinus Thrax, *Gordiana* from Gordian III – a sequence quite remarkable, given the mutual antipathies of these men.[77] It was also the centre of a vigorous civilian community, who developed the *vicus* into a substantial town: they collectively constituted a population of Syrians – 1000 soldiers, their families, attendants, and veterans, perhaps 5000 people in all – planted in Pannonia, and they were reinforced by new recruits from Syria and by the migration to the area of other Syrian civilians. The sheer Syrian-ness of the *vicus*, of course, tends to imply the comparatively recent recruitment of the regiment in its Syrian homeland, as well as their continued reception of new Syrian recruits.

The dedications attest a continuing attachment to Syrian deities. Two temples to Sol Elagabalus, the Emesan god, were built at the camp,[78] and during the reign of the Severans two others were built for the goddess Diana, one to Diana Tifitana in Septimius' reign, the other to Diana Augusta and dated to the reign of Alexander Severus and so no doubt in honour of his mother, the dowager Empress Iulia Mammaea, a native of Emesa. Thirteen altars have been found in these temples, dedicated to those deities and including four examples to Jupiter Heliopolitanus[79] – there was a continuing link between Emesa and the site of the great temple at Baalbek/Heliopolis. Those of the altars which are dated range from about 200 to the 250s.[80] The honours given to the regiment by other emperors show a loyalty directed at whoever occupied the throne, or at least to the man who controlled Pannonia.

The people of the regiment were generous in their inscriptions, so that for once we have a considerable number of the names of soldiers and veterans as well as of officers (and so making it all the stranger that there are no earlier such inscriptions). Of the prefects we have the names, or partial names, of eleven or twelve men. They are mostly commemorated at Intercisa, with others at

Caesarea in Syria-Palestine, at Capua in Italy, and in other parts of Pannonia; since such men moved about a lot to different postings, it is in their careers that their time with the regiment is noted. Of the lesser officers we have the names of ten men all noted at Intercisa, some on altars, others on graves.[81] (If each man served as prefect of the regiment for the standard period of three years, we have the names of the men who commanded the unit for more than half of the period between 180 and 240, which may be unprecedented for any auxiliary regiment.)

Several men, mainly veterans, recorded that their origins were in Syria. Two simply said they were from Syria,[82] but four men specified Emesa as their hometown.[83] Others came from Arethusa, a town (now ar-Restan) a short way north of Emesa along the Orontes, which had been part of the Emesan kingdom for a time in the first century BC until detached by Pompey; others came from Samosata in Commagene, Carrhai in Mesopotamia beside the Edessan kingdom, and Damascus, the next city south from Emesa.[84] Another may have come from Gerasa, or from a town whose name began 'Cl' – the reading of the inscription is unclear, though the official name of Apamaea was 'Claudia Apamaea', and this may have been his origin.[85] Recruitment into the regiment clearly took place throughout Syria and even into Arabia (if Gerasa is correct), just as it did into other Syrian regiments.

Unfortunately it is not possible to date the recruitment of these men, except for Bazas from Gerasa or 'Cl – ', who died as a veteran during the reign of Septimius Severus; we do not know either his age or his length of service, but he had clearly completed twenty-five years service, and had then lived on after his retirement, so his original recruitment most probably took place some time before Commodus' accession, probably in the 170s (another detail which might suggest that the regiment had existed for some time before arriving at Intercisa).[86] The inscriptions at Intercisa are all dated between 180 and 251/253, the great majority before the death of Severus Alexander in 235, so it is reasonable to conclude that some of these men from Syria were recruited to reinforce the cohort rather than being among its original members. In other words, we may have here another case of continuing recruitment from the regiment's original homeland while it was serving elsewhere, into a second or even a third generation after the first recruitment and the formation of the regiment (depending on the date of the cohort's origin, of course); certainly it was still recruiting from Syria decades after it had arrived in Pannonia. The great majority of inscriptions, however, are not dated, and the names of the men recorded are generally of the usual Roman blandness, with no indication of their origin. But there are several Syrian names amongst the ordinary soldiers – Bazas, Sallumas, Monimus, Mumianus, Barsemus, Barsamus, Abibelus – and two of the women named on the stones – Amma and Aurelia Immidaru – also have Syrian names.

The civil settlement attached to the Emesans' camp, the *vicus*, has also produced a wide range of inscriptions, many of which indicate an eastern origin for the inhabitants. The study of these by J. Fitz has found a set of eight Syrians and seven more 'Orientals' who exhibited some connection with the east.[87] Some of the identifications are fairly dubious, given the practices of Roman

nomenclature; further, a dedication to an eastern god does not necessarily imply an eastern origin for the dedicator, particularly by the third century AD. And yet, despite these quibbles, it is clear that there was a pervading Syrian influence in the town, as there was amongst the soldiers. In effect, this was a Syrian colony planted on the Danube.

There also appears to have been a *cohors* II *Hemesenorum equitata*, which is so faintly and dubiously recorded in the sources that it may not have even existed (though a *cohors* I might imply a second regiment). One epitaph is from Bordeaux, where the lapicide bungled the regiment's name as II *HEMINOOR*, though it looks as though *Hemesenorum* may really have been meant.[88] The other inscription – there are only two possible records of this unit – is from the Palmyra, recording two soldiers as *KO* II *E*, of which the first two elements are fairly obviously '*Cohors* II', but the 'E' could be 'Emesa' or possibly 'equitata', or something else entirely; it does not help that this was also obviously in Greek. One of these men was a *dromadarius*, the commander of the camel riders, and the location of the burial implies that a third-century date is most likely.[89] If this really was an Emesan unit it was partly mounted on camels (as the existence of a *dromadarius* indicates), but it was also *equitata*, which suggests that some of the men used horses as well as, or instead of, camels. In this the regiment was similar to those recruited from Arabia after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom, some of which were also *dromadaria* and *equitata*. Maybe *cohors* II was an emergency recruitment for one of the Parthian Wars; it seems unlikely that it lasted for long as a unit. On the whole the existence of this regiment is difficult to accept on the existing evidence.[90] One would certainly like to see more records providing more definitive evidence of it, and rather less scattered than only at Bordeaux (not an area where the military was usually stationed) and Palmyra.

A *numerus Hemesenorum* – a scouting regiment – is recorded at el-Kantara (Calceus Herculis) in Mauretania Caesariensis between 209 and 211 and also in the reign of Alexander Severus twenty years later.[91] It was at that post long enough for veterans to settle in the area, to die, and to leave several gravestones in which they were recorded.[92] It was accompanied at the posting by the *numerus Palmyrenorum* (on which see 'Palmyra' in Part II) and between them these two units, along with a vexillation of the III *Augusta* legion, controlled the vital el-Kantara pass; the whole force was usually under the command of one of the legion's officers, acting as *praepositus* of the *numeri*.[93]

A second *numerus Hemesenorum* is recorded in a papyrus from Egypt in which a soldier is recorded as being transferred to another unit; the record is dated only to the second or third century.[94] This is probably a different unit than that at el-Kantara in Numidia, unless that had been transferred to Egypt. Recruitment by Hadrian of both units seems probable (see, on this dating, the discussion of the *numeri* from Palmyra in Part II).

Of the four regiments recruited at, or in the name of, Emesa it is noticeable that two are extremely badly recorded, whereas the other two are recorded extremely well. In both of the regiments which are well recorded the personnel maintained their Syrian identities so long as the regiment existed, and both

continued to receive new recruits from Syria. In particular the record at Intercisa suggests that the regiment there, *cohors* I, was self-consciously Syrian right up until the time its records cease. The *numerus* at al-Kantara, being brigaded with a Palmyrene regiment, had plenty of incentive to continue Syrian-ness.

Nabataea

In 106 the Emperor Trajan ordered the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom. The details of what followed are indistinct, except for the name of the conqueror and first governor A. Cornelius Palma, and the fact that there was certainly some fighting, which might have been significant enough for another emperor to adopt the honorific title of *Arabicus*, though Trajan did not do so; instead there was a commemorative issue of coins proclaiming *Arabia adquisita* (not, therefore, conquered).[95] The new province was set up almost at once. The conquering commander, Palma, was soon replaced by C. Claudius Severus, who was in office for seven or eight years, until the eve of the Parthian War. He is recorded as supervising such activities as legionaries hewing stones near Petra, probably for the new road, the Via Nova Traiana.[96] 'Arabia' replaced 'Nabataea' as the name of the province, and as usual, the Nabataean army was taken over and organised as six *cohortes equitatae* – I to VI *Ulpia Petraeorum*.

Three of these units were *milliaria* – of double strength, almost 1000 men each, though at least one of them seems to have begun at a normal strength of 480 men and to have been increased in size later. This subtracted 4500, rising to 5000, young men from the population of the region. This was surely a substantial fraction of a population which was probably fairly thinly spread in the first place, for a goodly proportion of the Nabataean kingdom was desert. All units were *equitatae*, but only one, *cohors* III, was *sagittaria*. The Nabataean army would thus seem to have been somewhat less affected by Parthian military methods than, say, the Commagenean, or even the Ituraean. These units all bore the name *Ulpia*, showing that they were all raised during the reign of Trajan. Given the date of the formation of the province, this recruitment took place between 107 and 117, and probably before 114, the beginning of the Parthian War. The large size of three of these regiments suggests that Trajan was requiring a large force for his new war – and indeed the annexation of Nabataea was probably in part a preparation for that Parthian War. He gained two advantages by the annexation, apart from the renown of having extended the formal boundaries of the empire: he now seemed to have no potential enemy at his back during the campaign – until the Jewish rebellion in Egypt blew up – and by incorporating the Nabataean army into the Roman forces in advance of that war he received a significant increase of the type of soldier which would be most useful in the coming campaign.

The history of these units is mainly traceable by references in discharge diplomas. Two of the regiments, II and III, appear to have been sent to Egypt, though the evidence is uncertain and ambiguous. It consists of the personal career records of two officers who served in or commanded the units, and both

of whom served in Egypt; it is not altogether clear that they were members of units themselves at the time, though these men were certainly there when their epitaphs were composed.[97] Elsewhere the record of the regiments is thin. *Cohors* III (*milliaria equitata sagittariorum*) was in Cappadocia as part of Arrian's expeditionary force against the Alans in Asia Minor in 135,[98] but is not previously recorded elsewhere. *Cohors* II (*milliaria equitata*) may have been in Egypt under the command of C. Camusius Clemens, but this is no more than a guess.[99]

The other four cohorts all served in Syria. *Cohortes* I and V were in north Syria at an unknown location – that is, in the Syrian province as it existed after 106 – and are both recorded in several diplomas between 129 and c.163.[100] *Cohortes* IV and VI served in the province of Syria Palestinae between 136 and 160, as recorded in seven diplomas,[101] while VI is also recorded in an eighth diploma.[102] This set of postings marks a change in Roman methods, and may suggest that Arabia really was 'acquired' rather than 'conquered', and that the incorporation of the Nabataean army was more or less voluntary. None of the ex-Nabataean units were sent very far from their homeland, which implies a certainty in the Roman high command that they were in no danger of rebelling. At the same time, the Nabataeans had not been popular in Judaea, or perhaps elsewhere in Syria; posting two of the regiments to Palestine was to send a force strongly inimical to the Jews as an occupying force in the land which had recently rebelled.

The earliest date for the two units sent to Palestine, 136, is also the year after the end of the Second Jewish Revolt (132–135). Applebaum has assumed that the units were therefore (though he used the diploma from 139 for this) part of the Roman forces which fought to suppress that revolt.[103] This is, of course, possible, but it is also possible to interpret the evidence to show that the units were moved into the province after the revolt had been put down. It is known that Roman casualties in this war were heavy (though not so heavy as those of the rebels), and it would be sensible to bring in fresh full-strength units as the postwar occupation force. They would therefore be the occupying, not the conquering, forces (and their collective attitude to the enemy survivors might have been rather less vindictive than in units which had fought and suffered severely). There are no diplomas from the war (not surprisingly – the only way out of the army during that campaign was by death in action), but there are also no Palestinian diplomas from any period before the war, except one for 86. It is therefore impossible to resolve the question, though I tend to the idea of fresh units being brought in as occupiers. The units which had taken part in the conquest were surely exhausted and under strength by the time the fighting ended; at that point, fully manned units were smarter, stronger, and therefore more intimidatory, as well as not having as much of a built-in antagonism to the surviving local population as those who had fought and lost friends and colleagues in the fighting,[104] though the hereditary dislike between the Nabataeans and the Jews may well have survived.

The lack of evidence for these units, other than the diplomas, and other than the names of a few officers, also prevents any conclusions being drawn about the

personnel of the units, though one may be reasonably confident that the soldiers, as opposed to the officers and centurions, were entirely of Nabataean origin, and, given their specialisation, they are very likely to have been constantly reinforced and recruited up the strength from new recruits from Arabia.

Parthians and Arabs

One auxiliary regiment is described as *ala Parthorum et Arabaeorum sagittarii*. It was stationed at Mogontiacum in Germania Superior during the reign of Tiberius, where two men of the unit were buried.[105] The combination of Parthians and Arabs in a single regiment is unique, but both groups of soldiers were probably, at least originally, mounted archers. The regiment was presumably formed by joining two separate units into one, no doubt because of reduced numbers in each of the original regiments and their similar modes of fighting, and also perhaps because of the inability of the Roman military to acquire reinforcements from either Arabs or Parthians for the two original units. It has been suggested that the Parthian part of the joint unit was originally an *ala Parthorum* which is recorded as fighting in Dalmatia in the war there in AD 6–9.[106] This cannot be proved, of course.

The Arab regiment is not otherwise recorded. If it was joined to its Parthian partner after the Dalmatian War it had been formed in Augustus' reign. The recruits may have been Nabataeans who had assisted in one or more of the wars in Palestine or Syria, as suggested by Kennedy.[107] Later an *ala* II *Arabaeorum* is attested in an epitaph from Moesia Inferior.[108] This is a much later instance, of the late second or even the third century, and it is not a good indication of the date of the regiment's origin, or of the region where it was recruited. The existence of the Roman province of Arabia would suggest an obvious source were it not for the fact that regiments recruited there after 106 were named after the city of Petra; this might in fact indicate that the Arab section originated before that annexation. But the number 'II' implies an *ala* I, which could be that which had become united with the Parthian unit. If so, we thus have two regiments recruited from 'Arabia', however that was defined at the time, during Augustus' reign. Tentatively, one might suggest that they were recruited at the time of his presence in the region around 20 BC, when he was actively contemplating a Parthian War.

There were four other 'Parthian' regiments in the Roman army. Two are relatively well recorded. At Novaesium in Germania Inferior, was *ala Parthorum veterana*. It was probably there already in the early Augustan period, since the auxiliary fort at the site was replaced by a legionary one later in Augustus' reign. The evidence, however, is an inscription on a silver ring, an item which was all too portable: it cannot therefore be taken as evidence that the unit was definitely at Novaesium, though it is obviously possible, or even likely.[109] *Ala* I *Augusta Parthorum* was, from its name, also recruited under Augustus. (This may be the regiment recorded in Dalmatia, which does not have the title *Augusta*, but this is sometimes later omitted in other records.) It had been moved to Mauretania

Caesariensis by 107,[110] and was there (as '*ala Parthorum*') in 152;[111] it is recorded there in a considerable body of other texts during the second century AD.[112]

Two other Parthian units are recorded, but only once each. In the province of Mauretania Tingitana a *cohors Parthorum* is recorded in an inscription on an altar, but the fragmentary nature of the text has led to the suggestion that it was really an *ala* regiment.[113] Either way, it was a Parthian unit, and one which is otherwise not recorded. There was also an *ala* I *Parthorum sagittariorum*, which is noted in an inscription in which the career of the prefect M. Arruntius Frugi was described.[114] His command of the *ala* may be dated to the reign of Trajan. This is also the only archer unit amongst these regiments. It seems that the *ala Parthorum et Arabaeorum* was also *sagittaria* at first, but some inscriptions omit that description, so it may be that as the original recruits died or retired, the joint regiment changed into a normal cavalry *ala*, quite possibly at the time of the union of the two sections. At its station in Germany its archery expertise may have been less useful than an ability to manoeuvre on horseback. And if that is the case then it is possible that the archery *ala* of Trajan's reign may have been only recently recruited. (Again, one thinks of the need Trajan clearly felt to have as large a contingent of archers and mounted infantry as possible for his invasion of the Parthian empire.)

The recruitment of Parthians into the Roman army is no more surprising than the recruitment of Sarmatians or Germans, or than the enlistment of Romans into the army of the Dacian kings. Parthia's periodical political turbulence could easily drive men into exile, and the Roman army was a secure and well-paid organisation. If a war was in prospect any exiles had the possibility of revenge and perhaps a return to their original homes. The earliest of these regiments were organised by Augustus, but there had earlier been Parthians who had fought for Pompey in the civil wars at the end of the Republic. It seems probable that the supply of recruits tended to dry up after Augustus' reign, which was no doubt one of the consequences of the peace agreement he reached with the Parthian king. The archery *ala* of Trajan's time may well be the product of his own war, or possibly an earlier one.

It is noticeable, despite the fact that these regiments were welcomed into the Roman army, that they were distributed well away from the eastern frontier. They must have been recruited either in Parthia (or rather, perhaps, Mesopotamia) in the time of the wars, or in Syria, since this land was where any refugee Parthians would have arrived into the Roman Empire – and they may have been refugees from the Parthian king's wrath. (It is this somewhat tenuous connection which is the excuse for including these regiments in a book about Syrians in the Roman Empire, together with the fact that at least one of them was brigaded with an Arab regiment.)

Two of the Parthian regiments went to the German frontier, one having fought in the Pannonian War, and two went to northwest Africa, in each case as far from the Parthian frontier as it was possible to send them. If the men were disgruntled refugees it would make sense to remove them from Syria where their proximity to Parthia might have tempted them into rash acts. The post of the

Trajanic *ala* is not known, though Arruntius' career was mainly in the east. The stationing of Parthian regiments in Africa might be used to suggest that its similar terrain to Mesopotamia was the reason for the posting – but then the other units were sent to Germany, the very reverse type of territory; such reasoning cannot therefore be used; the Roman army clearly thought in a different way.

Most of the individuals who are commemorated as serving in these Parthian regiments were their commanders, and their names tell us little or nothing about them or their origins. The two men who were in *ala Parthorum et Arabaeorum* and who were buried at Mogontiacum in Tiberius' reign were clearly of Parthian origin. Maris son of Casites had a brother called Masicates, all names which have an eastern ring to them, and the third man named on the epitaph had the purely Iranian name of Tigranes; the other stone commemorates Antiochus son of Antiochus who stated that he was a Parthian ('*Parthos*') from Anazarbus, a city in Cilicia. His brother had the Greco-Babylonian name of Belesippus. The combination of Greek names, the Babylonian connection, and a home city in Cilicia powerfully suggests that they were originally from a family of Macedonian settlers in a Greek city in Babylonia, possibly Babylon or Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, who had removed themselves into exile to avoid Parthian rule.

II. Auxiliary regiments from the cities

Antioch

It is curious that the one cohort recruited from the great city of Antioch should be *sagittaria (cohors* I *Antiochiensium sagittariorum*). The greatest city in the east, the third in the empire, which contributed only a few senators and *equites* to the imperial administration (and some hopeful usurpers of the imperial throne) out of a population of perhaps a third of a million, produced only one auxiliary cohort for the army. This is one surprising element, though the lack of enthusiasm for Roman rule may be thus confirmed. The other curiosity is that, out of the greatest urban settlement in the east, the soldiers it contributed are said, in one source, to be archers.

The city, like every city in the Greek eastern provinces, had its own militia, though how seriously and regularly the ephebes turned out to train is not clear, nor is it clear how keen the Roman government was on having the local citizenry trained to arms. On more than one occasion in the Republican civil wars, and in the subsequent wars and revolts, soldiers from the cities of the province took part in the fighting. Only one city is specifically mentioned in the written sources as producing a trained force – Berytus – so it is never clear that any other particular city did so, nor in what numbers its men turned out, but it must be assumed that all the cities were expected to field a force when required, perhaps up to a cohort in strength.[115]

The *cohors* I *Antiochiensium* is first recorded in a discharge diploma from Moesia dated 75, and it was still in that province according to other diplomas in 94 and 100,[116] by which time the regiment was stationed in Moesia Superior – the

original single province was divided into two in 86 when Domitian brought in large forces to fight his Dacian War.[117] Soon after 100 Trajan invaded Dacia, and Moesia Superior was the base from which the attack was launched. The Damascene engineer Apollodoros supervised the construction of a bridge over the Danube, and I *Antiochiensium* was the unit which garrisoned the fort on the Dacian side of the river at Drobeta.[118]

The one prefect of the cohort who is known by name, M. Aemilius Bassus, may well have been the unit's commander at that time. His career begins with this command, and he then held two more similar commands before taking up posts as procurator to conduct the census for the Emperor Hadrian, first in Gaul and then in Pontus and Bithynia. He went on to be *epistrategos* at Pelusion in Egypt and then at Thebes, and ended his career as procurator in Judaea. Each of his preliminary posts usually lasted three years; Hadrian became emperor in 117, which would be the earliest date for Bassus' office as census-taker, and so Bassus' first command could well date from 106, or before then, if there were gaps of any size between his appointments.[119] (The recipient of the diploma of 75, Herae son of Serapion, in fact came from Antioch, and this, by coincidence, was the first dated record of *cohors* I *Antiochiensium*; however, Herae served in *cohors* I *Raetarum*. Being discharged in 75 would suggest that he was recruited about 50; it is clearly a curious choice for a man from Antioch, but possibly the cohort served in Syria at that time; we do not know.)

The Antiochene regiment returned to Moesia Superior by 105,[120] and it was there also in 115,[121] so its time in Dacia was fairly short, if indeed it was ever thought to have left Moesia. It remained in Moesia Superior until at least 161,[122] when all record of it ceases. It is in this last reference, in 161, that the unit is described as '*sag(ittariorum)*'; no other record describes it in such a way. It has to be said that the conversion of such a unit from a normal infantry cohort into an archery regiment at that date and in that place would be highly unusual, not to say unlikely. Yet it does not seem that the inscriber can have made a mistake, for the letters are quite clear – though it could be a bureaucrat's error rather than one by the inscriber. This is definitely a puzzle, but the explanation that it was a mistake may avoid another unlikelihood: that the Antiochenes produced a regiment of archers.

There remains the question of when the cohort was founded. If it was not originally *sagittaria* (or perhaps not ever) then it was an ordinary infantry unit. The date of its first appearance in the record, in 75, is in fact very suggestive. This is just two years after the fighting in Syria – in Judaea and Emesa and Commagene, and before that, in Armenia – had finished. The demands on manpower in these conflicts had required the prolonged mobilisation of the citizen militias from many, or all, of the northern Syrian cities. It may be that it was during the fighting in the 60s and 70s (or even earlier, in Corbulo's Armenian War from 56) that the militia was organised as a full cohort of the *auxilia*, no doubt on an emergency basis 'for the duration'. By the time the fighting ended, the unit had been embodied for at least several years, and so its co-optation as a regular auxiliary unit could have been little more than a formality – but it was then immediately posted away from warm, dry Syria to Moesia. It was not at

that time an archery unit; it was therefore a unit of ordinary infantry, and this may be an explanation for its relatively static situation, as part of the garrison in Moesia, from which, apart from acting as garrison at the northern bridge-head at Drobeta during the Dacian War, it never moved.

The problem of its status as a regiment of archers can, of course, be explained as a clerical error, as suggested earlier, but it may also be that the men recruited came not from the city itself but from the surrounding countryside, the city's *chora*. The very large number of *sagittaria* units raised from all parts of Syria implies that this was the preferred method of fighting among Syrians, perhaps influenced by the proximity of Parthian power, perhaps an inheritance from the Seleukid army, whose methods were those upon which the client kingdoms' armies were based, perhaps due to the extensive pastoral territory in which animals would be grazed, and in which archers would be of particular use in defending the animals against prowling hunters, human and non-human. The ubiquity of Syrian archers does suggest that it was a skill widely practised by non-military men.

The fact that there was only one regiment raised from the populous city of Antioch may also be susceptible to a common-sense explanation. We do not know how large the citizen militia was, but such a city undoubtedly had a larger militia than the 480 men who comprised a single cohort. One may reasonably assume that the militia embodied for the Armenian and/or the Jewish Wars was considerably larger than that. They undoubtedly suffered casualties, but at the same time the survivors would have emerged from the warfare as trained, efficient, professional soldiers. At the end of the figiting some would not be wanted, as too old, disabled, or obstreperous; it may therefore be suggested that those who constituted the original cohort in (about) 73–75 were the fit, the efficient, and the willing volunteers, men who had taken to the permanent military life, and who were selected by the Roman recruiters as suitable material for the professional army. So out of the full city militia, the Roman army acquired a cohort of soldiers already trained to arms, a unit which further recruits could join. It would seem to be a good bargain on both sides.

The one soldier of the regiment (apart from Aemilius Bassus) who is known by name was Sapia son of Sarmosus, who was discharged in May 100 after twenty-five years' service – and so was recruited exactly in 75, the very year when the regiment first appears, and when it also first appears in Moesia – a series of chronological coincidences which must not be taken as proof of the regiment's date of constitution.[123] Sapia helpfully gives his birthplace as Anazarbus in Cilicia. His name may be Parthian or Anatolian – he came from the same place as the Parthian Antiochos from Babylonia who served in the *ala Parthorum et Arabaeorum* – and his recruitment date fits well with the suggestion that the regiment was embodied in the early 70s, but one man's record cannot prove anything.

Apamaea

The city of Apamaea was notable in the Seleukid period as the monarchy's main military base in Syria; in particular, it was where the war elephants were housed

and trained.[124] It was a legionary base for a time in the republican period, and suffered a destructive siege in the civil wars,[125] but then in the imperial period the legions were stationed elsewhere. The city was, however, one of the four great cities of the Syrian province, second only to Antioch, and it had an extensive *chora*; its taxable population, according to surviving census records, was over 100,000.[126] Its territory stretched north to border on that with Antioch, and eastwards into the steppeland and towards the Syrian Desert,[127] and the total population of the city-and-*chora* in the early Roman period, urban and rural, has been suggested to be half a million people or so.

Given this background and size, it is perhaps again surprising that the city produced only one cohort for the Roman army, *cohors* I *Apamenorum*; it is less surprising that this cohort was both *equitata* and *sagittaria*. The geography of Apamene, the *chora* of the city, can perhaps explain this. The steppeland to the east stretched away for a considerable distance before fading gradually into desert. It was a region of grassland in which the people's livelihood was mainly livestock raising. Into this region human agrarian settlement had been expanding from the early Hellenistic period, partly under the pressure of an increasing rural (and urban) population resulting from the stimulus to prosperity produced by Seleukid development and the Roman peace, and partly due to a period of wetter climate which encouraged the cultivation of crops and increased the numbers of livestock. These circumstances exerted relentless economic pressure on the nomads whose grazing lands were thereby taken and reduced.[128] The nomads were therefore, being discontented, likely to be Parthian (or Jewish, or Emesan) allies in any war, and a newly raised regiment of horse archers would successfully remove many potentially troublesome men who might seize the opportunity of any war or disturbance to raid settlements which had become less well defended because the army was busy elsewhere.

The first dated occurrence of the *cohors* I *Apamenorum* is a discharge diploma of 99, when the regiment was in Galatia-Cappadocia.[129] The epitaph of P. Valerius Priscus, a Spaniard who died in Rome, indicates that he had been prefect of the cohort earlier in his career. It was the second post he held out of six, in command in Cappadocia, and so he is linked with the diploma of 99. Its absence from the record before its service in Cappadocia echoes the absence of I *Antiochiensium* before 75. The proved existence of the regiment by 99 suggests that it might have originally been recruited during the Syrian warfare between 66 and 73, though if the unit had been raised for the Jewish revolt there is no evidence that it served there.

The regiment later went to Egypt, where it is recorded in 118/119,[130] and from 144 onwards.[131] Therefore, the unit had served in Cappadocia for some time between its formation – which was (again, and like the regiment from Antioch) in or about 75, out of a mobilised city militia – and 118/119 by which time it was in Egypt. It was stationed in the Wadi Hammamet, the major trade route from Upper Egypt to the Red Sea coast, and at Mons Porphyrites, a quarry of valued stone also in the eastern desert; there is also an undated strength report from Elephantine.[132] The one dated record is thus just subsequent to the great

Jewish revolt of 115–117 in Egypt and Cyprus, which so damaged Trajan's Parthian campaign. This may thus have been the occasion for the unit being sent to Egypt in the first place.

Despite the survival of a considerable body of texts from Egypt in which the regiment is mentioned, its location at any particular time in Egypt cannot be decided. It was recorded at Qasr el-Binat in the Wadi Hammamet, but the wadi is a hot, dry, desert route, not the likely station for a full regiment; neither is the quarry at Mons Porphyrites, though a detachment of perhaps fifty to a hundred men at either place is quite possible; alternatively several detachments of the regiment may have been spread along the route. A record from Elephantine, a bureaucratic record of personnel, is not necessarily a record of the unit's being stationed there. There are several documents dated more or less regularly from 144 to 298, though several of them can only be located vaguely in the second or third centuries.[133] A detachment was sent to serve in Mesopotamia in Verus' Parthian War,[134] and the regiment is also mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, at the end of the fourth century, where for once, its location is clear, at Silsila.[135] All but one of the find spots of these documents are in the Fayum area – the exception is the fort at Qasr el-Binat in the Wadi Hammamet[136] – but as they are mainly private documents they are not good guides to the regiment's location. The one item which has led to a precise conjecture has linked the unit to the legion II *Traiana* when it was stationed at Nikopolis outside Alexandria, and this may have been *Apamenorum*'s station at least for a time. Despite the imprecision of many of the documents it is clear that the regiment remained in Egypt from early in the second century to the end of the fourth.

Apart from the commander Priscus there are no individuals known by name in the regiment.

Ascalon

The city of Ascalon had survived the various wars in Hellenistic Palestine by either adopting a posture of neutrality, or by a speedy submission to the most powerful. It had submitted to Alexander, to the Ptolemies, and to Antiochos III; it not been subject to capture by the Maccabees, or by the Romans, and when it was eventually attacked, by the Jewish rebels in the first flush of their success in AD 66, it had by that time received a Roman garrison of two cohorts, who saw off a disorganised and careless Jewish attack without difficulty.[137] It is likely that this garrison was new at the time, perhaps placed there by the governor Cestius Gallus as part of his precautions following the disastrous withdrawal of the Roman forces through the Beth Horon Pass after the first failed attack on Jerusalem.

The city produced one cohort, *cohors* I *Ascalonitanorum*, which is recorded once as *sagittaria* and once as *equitata*, and acquired the honorific epithet *felix* at some point. It is first recorded in a Syrian discharge diploma of 88,[138] and appears in other diplomas in 93, 129, 144, 153, 156/157, and c.163, always in Syria.[139] It is possible that it was stationed on the Euphrates about the end of the first century, for the gravestone of a *signifer* of the regiment, Marcus son of Goras from Emesa,

referred to earlier, was found at Tell Ahmar, twenty kilometres south of Europos (the former Carchemish). Marcus appears to have been still in the regiment at the time of his death, for he is not accorded the *tria nomina* of the Roman citizen, though he had served twenty-five years and could claim the age of fifty; the regiment was clearly even then recruiting from outside Ascalon, just as the Antiochene regiment recruited throughout Syria.[140]

The regiment's service was, as noted, always in Syria, but this also meant that it was moved away from its original home in southern Palestine, probably as soon as it was formed, which, if in 66, was a result of the Jewish revolt and the attack on the city; one also may wonder if the two cohorts which repelled the Jewish attack in 66, became the later *Ascalonitanorum* regiment. Given the threat posed in the first Jewish revolt of 66–70, the city was no doubt constrained to develop its own self-defence force, which would have been employed alongside the professional cohorts which defended the city; it would be sensible for those cohorts to recruit in the city. The continued presence of the unit in Syria would suggest that it was regarded as conspicuously loyal – on the assumption that moving units away from their home territory was an act of Roman suspicion.

The cohort's date of formation can only be located as before 88, but the threat to the city between 66 and 70 would seem to be a likely time for an increasingly professionalised cohort to become organised; it then remained as a full unit of the Roman army after the fighting finished, and was posted to the Euphrates as part of the general Roman reorganisation of the Parthian frontier in the 70s, which included the conquest of Commagene.

Canatha

Canatha (modern Qanawat), on the southern edge of the Hawran upland, east of the Jordan River, was a city which only grew to an appreciable size during the Roman peace from 30 BC. It was part of the Decapolis group of cities in the middle Jordan valley, and so it was in the Syrian province until the boundaries were reorganised by Trajan after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in 106; Canatha was then assigned to the Syrian province until another general boundary revision under Septimius Severus, when it was shifted into Arabia.[141]

The city gave its name to a single regiment, *cohors* I *Flavia Canathenorum milliaria sagittariorum*, and this provides plenty of information. Its origin at Canatha, given the Latinised spelling, is clear. It was a double strength unit of about 1000 soldiers, and they were archers. It was also recruited in the Flavian period, which brings us once more to the Jewish revolt of 66–73 and its aftermath. It is probable that this was another of the regiments recruited or embodied in the late 60s as back-up for the main Roman forces campaigning inside Judaea, and formally organised as a permanent Roman auxiliary regiment after the war was over; this incorporation certainly took place after AD 70, according to its name.

Canatha was in the south of what became the Syrian province, but in a detached part of it at the time of the Jewish Revolt, an area called Coele Syria by then. The Decapolis cities had been organised as a group by Pompey during

his own Jewish War, as a way of keeping them out of Jewish and Nabataean hands. The southern side of the Hawran was an area significantly richer and wetter than the surrounding lands (it is the present Jebel Druze), for it collected more rain from the Mediterranean due to its height, but it was also close to some of the roughest country in the region, the basalt lands of the Leja, the ancient Trachonitis, an area of frozen lava, black and contorted, in which there were plenty of caves and other hidden places, where bandits lurked. This had been a troublesome area for at least a couple of centuries, and it had been passed around between various client kings – the Nabataeans, Ituraeans, Herod, Herod Philip, Agrippa I, Agrippa II – with occasional Roman military interventions between the kings' times of rule, and after they died but before the area's future was decided, or when things were especially bad. Herod's solution had been to import a regiment of Babylonian Jewish archers, refugees from Parthia;[142] his son Herod Philip had tried a softer approach, paying close attention to local needs and complaints, and travelling regularly through the area to attend to the complaints of the inhabitants in person and on the spot, an approach which seems to have been the most successful, but one which most kings found tedious and rarely attempted.[143]

Under these conditions the Canathans were more militarily alert than most citizens, at the very least to the danger of bandit raids. In 66 the Jewish rebellion came close, when the Jewish forces in Galilee (under the command of the future historian Josephus) pushed into the Golan area, next door to Canatha's territory.[144] No doubt the Canathan militiamen sprang to arms, though there is no sign that they had to do any fighting. But this was exactly the sort of response the Romans could appreciate, and it is therefore probable that the regiment was readily embodied as a regular auxiliary regiment by Vespasian in the late 60s or early 70s.

Apart from its designation as *Flavia* the regiment is unrecorded until its appearance in discharge diplomas dated 114 and 116, when it was in Raetia.[145] The regiment's station was at Sorviodurum on the Danube (now Straubing in Bavaria), where a regimental altar, another inscription, and a regimental stamp have been found.[146] It remained at Sorviodurum until at least the 160s,[147] and almost certainly until the 230s, when the region was extensively ravaged by a massive barbarian invasion. It is attested there in at least nineteen sources between 116 and 166/168.

Straubing fort was built about 75 in earth and timber and was first occupied by a local unit, the *cohors* II *Raetorum*, which would be the builders; this unit had been moved to Saalburg in the Taunus by the end of Hadrian's reign, and was replaced at Sorviodurum by the *Canathenorum* regiment, though since it was twice the size of the Raetian regiment it may be that half was sent to another location for a time. The fort was then rebuilt in stone during Hadrian's reign, and this was presumably the work of the newly arrived regiment, perhaps because it needed more accommodation – it would need to develop accommodation for the horses, if not for the extra men, who could be accommodated in tents, for the *Raetorum* regiment was only a normal-sized infantry cohort. It is also quite

likely that the timbers of the old fort, fifty years old by then, had sunk into decay by the end of Hadrian's reign.

Discharge diplomas regularly record the regiment in Raetia during the next sixty years, the latest being dated 167/168.[148] The fort was captured by the raid from north of the river in 233, and perhaps again in other raids in the next twenty years.[149] It was probably reoccupied later in the century, but by then the *Canathenorum* regiment had vanished. In the confusion of the troubles a valuable set of parade armour was collected in a bronze bowl and carried off. This is the 'Straubing treasure', found in 1950 to the west of the fort in the *vicus* which had developed next to the fort since its foundation. It is generally assumed to be a theft by a looter, but it is as likely to have been hidden by a member of the regiment in an attempt to save the regimental memorabilia. The treasure included seven face masks in bronze for use in special parades, three of which are reminiscent of eastern design – possibly brought by the regiment from the east when it arrived.[150]

The *Canathenorum* regiment was therefore at Sorviodurum for something over a century. During that time the civil settlement developed beside it, populated no doubt by veterans (the altar discovered there was set up by veterans of the regiment) and their families. The Straubing treasure was found in the rooms of a building described as a 'villa', which was part of the *vicus*. This *vicus* was no doubt one of the first places attacked by the barbarians in their several invasions; and the failure of the Roman government to restore the frontier to its pre-invasion strength will have also resulted in the failure of the *vicus* to revive (or the treasure to be recovered).

Few of the personnel of the regiment are known by name, and none give any indication of their origins.

Chalcis

The city of Chalcis in north Syria (modern Qinnesrin)[151] was one of the second rank of Syrian cities, along with its neighbours Beroia (Aleppo), Hierapolis (Bambyke/Mambij), and others. It was, however, in a key strategic position on the road linking Antioch and Apamaea and the Euphrates at Zeugma, and there is a later reference to the frontier system described as the '*limes* of Chalcis', which is a network of roads and forts controlling the dry lands of the area to the south and east of the city.[152] In the Arab Empire this situation at a major road junction and at the interface of desert and cultivation led it to become a major garrison and government centre, the head of a huge problem province.

The city, like Apamaea, had one face directed towards the desert. From its lands the Romans recruited no less than three auxiliary cohorts, I *Chalcidenorum equitata*, II *Chalcidenorum sagittariorum*, and I *Flavia Chalcidenorum sagittariorum*. This third cohort, from its name, was clearly recruited after 70, and probably by Vespasian; the other two, lacking such an imperial indicator, were presumably recruited earlier, perhaps simultaneously, or maybe one at a time; the difference between them – one horsed and the other archers – might imply a simultaneous

origin, or even a single original regiment, later split into two. Given that their first records come from the 70s this is probably another case of the mobilisation of a city militia and their later retention as part of the regular army, though the precise date of their origin is unknown.

Both of the earlier cohorts were posted initially to Moesia, and are recorded there in 75, and II also in 78.[153] *Cohors* I was then posted to Africa, where it is recorded in 127. One of its prefects, T. Staberius Secundus, recorded his career on his epitaph in Rome. He held three military posts, the third of which – though it was probably his first posting – was command of an *ala Moesica*, which he is known to have held in 78.[154] Each post usually lasted three years, with a gap between posts; he made a point of noting that his command of *cohors* I *Chalcidenorum* was in Africa; it was therefore after 78.

Cohors II's next appearance in the record after 78 is in discharge diplomas from Moesia dated 91/92, 92, 93, and 99.[155] When the province was divided by Domitian, the unit was in Moesia Inferior, probably at one of the forts along the Danube. It is repeatedly attested in the province on several diplomas until c.157, the date of the last diploma from the province.[156]

It would seem, however, that for a time the regiment was also stationed north of the river, in Dacia. In the area of Sucidava (modern Celei) tiles bearing the stamped name of the regiment have been found at several points along the Danube.[157] Sucidava was (like Drobeta farther west) an important crossing point of the river, opposite the legionary fortress at Oescus in Moesia. Eventually, during Constantine's reign, by which time Dacia north of the river had been evacuated, a great bridge was built across the river connecting the two places. Even before then, however, it was clearly seen as a danger point, or as an opportune place to make a crossing, depending on one's point of view. The date of the tiles at Sucidava is not known, but they do suggest that II *Chalcidenorum* formed the garrison for a considerable time, long enough to establish a tilery and presumably put up some permanent buildings, this during the second century, after the conquest of Dacia. The spread of the tiles also suggests that this was a fairly major industrial operation, supplying tiles to other units over a considerable distance.

Cohors I meanwhile remained in Africa. It was already there, as Staberius' epitaph shows, not long after 78; it was mentioned in Hadrian's *Adlocutio* in 128,[158] and is recorded in inscriptions and a diploma also in the 120s.[159] It is noted on a statue base at the fort at Gemellae on the extreme southern edge of the land, in an area which was taken under control by the Roman army. An inscription of between 123 and 133 mentions the presence there of troops of the African legion III *Augusta*, and from the reign of Antoninus Pius to that of Valerian (c.138–260) there are several inscriptions which imply that the garrison was an *ala Pannoniorum*.[160] This sequence suggests that a joint party from the legion and the *Chalcidenorum* cohort established the fort, which was then occupied by the Pannonian cavalry unit. The fort was therefore built by the infantry for the accommodation of the cavalry; the latter were no doubt grateful, not least that someone else had done the work.

The regiment is also named on three inscriptions from Bir Oum in Tripolitania, all of them by or for serving officers. C. Maecius Picaliarus is named on a marble plaque as '*leg Aug pp*', which was put up by the cohort in 163–164; Papiria Irena, the wife of the prefect C. Suetonius Lauras[ius] put up an altar; another prefect, Gallomarius, is named in a second marble plaque.[161] This concentration of records strongly suggest that the unit was stationed at this place for some time, and the dating extends its stay at least into the 160s.

The third cohort, I *Flavia*, formed from its name under Vespasian, first appears in the record in 144,[162] and then in three diplomas between 153 and c.163, always in Syria.[163] Thirty or more years later it was noted on a statue base at Palmyra.[164] The regiment would therefore seem to have been in Syria from its recruitment, and moved to Palmyra as part of the general forward movement of the frontier under Septimius and Caracalla. Its continued presence in the province of its home city is, of course, most unusual.

Cheesman believed that there was a *cohors* V *Chalcidenorum* stationed in Syria, based on an inscription which named vexillations which had been collected, apparently for Trajan's Parthian War.[165] A lack of any other reference to this unit rather suggests it is a misreading of the stone, which is also now reckoned to be of the time of Lucius Verus' Parthian War in the 160s; and if 'V' is discarded, so also must be the inferred regiments numbered III and IV, which are also not in evidence anywhere.

It is worth noting that this relatively small city produced three regiments, whereas the two much greater cities Antioch and Apamara only produced one each.

Cyrrhus

The city of Cyrrhus is situated in the hills of northern Syria, in a position to interpose between the Euphrates crossing and Antioch and the Mediterranean coast. It was probably originally a fairly small military post of Alexander's time, whose garrison gave it a name from the soldiers' Macedonian homeland. It was boosted to a city after 300 BC by Seleukos Nikator, but it was, like Chalcis and others in the area, always of the second rank. It was a legionary base for a time in Augustus' reign, but the legion had moved to Zeugma by AD 18. For a time between 64 BC and AD 18 it had been the northernmost city of the Syrian province, close to the Commagenean boundary, which was no doubt the justification for the legion being posted there, but the first annexation of Commagene moved the border northwards, and the legion was then (or earlier) shifted to the newly acquired river crossing.

It may be this early military experience which stimulated the formation of an auxiliary unit from the area. The only one on record is *cohors* II *Cyrrhestarum*, which is attested several times in the first century AD. A *cohors* I has therefore been inferred,[166] but no evidence for it has emerged. It is best to assume that any *cohors* I in the sequence was recruited elsewhere at the same time and so acquired a different name.

Cohors II was never listed in a discharge diploma, probably because relatively few have survived from the province to which it was posted, Dalmatia. But, in compensation, Dalmatia has produced inscriptional evidence of the presence of the regiment, in the form of eight epitaphs of its soldiers who died there. All of these records come from a restricted area of the province around the legionary headquarters at Tilurum and Burnum, and are dated between the reign of Tiberius and the second half of the first century. There are none later than that.

The names recorded are all redolent of an eastern origin in one way or another. Dagnas son of Apsaeus came from Beroia ('*Berea*'), the neighbouring city to Chalcis to the north (the modern Aleppo).[167] From the same city came Stieu son of Barnainu and M. Pythas son of Segnus.[168] Spelling on all these stones is very variable, with the unit's name emerging as *Cyrrhestaru*, *Crestar*, and *Chyrres*, so the personal names are probably inaccurately rendered as well. A third man was called Beres, and was identified as an archer on the stone: he does not have his unit or his origin recorded; he was based at Salonae and his name suggests Syria, possibly even a name derived from the city-name Beroia.[169] Also at Salonae C. Iulius Mar[ ], a veteran of II *Cyrrhestarum*, was buried, aged ninety years; originally also from Beroia, he died in the third quarter of the first century.[170] The legionary base at Tilurum was a short distance to the north, where the VII *Claudia* legion camped until AD 42, and which then became the camp of XX *Valeria Victrix*;[171] as an archer, however, Beres is much more likely to have been in an auxiliary unit than a legion – though it must be said that *cohors* II *Cyrrhestarum* was not an archer's regiment, so far as we know; the lack of a bureaucratric attestation makes the precise nature of the regiment unclear.

The soldier Dagnas was buried at Burnum, which was the legionary base in Dalmatia, as was Heras son of Ennomaius, who was from Cyrrhus itself (*Cyro*); [ ]reas son of Abemmus commemorated him.[172] At Salonae, along with Beres, there were buried two men who survived their service to receive Roman citizenship afterwards: C. Iulius Andromachus, who served for forty years, and C. Iulius Barienus, who served for forty-two; both claimed to be sixty-five years old at their deaths. Barienus was the son of Theodorus, and was commemorated by C. Iulius Scapula, his brother: Andromachus was commemorated by C. Iulius Apolla, no doubt a fellow veteran.[173] L. Mar[ ] from Beroia, fifty years old at his death, was buried at Burnum in the mid-first century.[174]

All these men's names and origins show their eastern ancestry. Five came from Beroia, one from Cyrrhus; Beres, giving no details, has a name perhaps derived from Beroia. Four men show Greek names or affiliations – Barienus and Scapula were the sons of Theodorus; Andromachus and Apolla (which may be a shortened version of a longer name) retained their Greek given names as their *cognomina*. Five of these men died in the early part of the first century, and so were all no doubt recruited during Augustus' reign; probably they were among the first members of the regiment. The citizen names acquired by some of them – C. Iulius (and so from Augustus) – show that their citizenship was awarded at the time of their recruitment, though perhaps not officially enacted until their retirement. Similarly the two citizen veterans buried at Salonae both

served for four decades or more; they were buried in the late first century, but they had been born in all probability during Augustus' reign – the ninety-year-old was thus probably also born in Augustus' reign, served in Tiberius', and lived on into Vespasian's. It would seem therefore that the regiment was still recruiting in Syria into Tiberius' reign at least.

The records of the regiment cease with these epitaphs, some of which are dated to the second half of the first century. The regiment is not recorded anywhere in or out of Dalmatia after that time. Speculation might suggest destruction in the civil war of 69–70, or in one of the Danube wars between that time and 106, but the fact is that we have no facts to work on.

Damascus

Claiming to be the oldest city in the world (one of several making that claim), Damascus was also a major strategic prize in any conflict in Syria. Pompey secured it by sending legates ahead to the city almost as soon as he marched into Syria, and the city remained a staunch friend of Rome, since Rome protected it from the Ituraeans who had been pressing on it for a generation, and from the Jews and the Nabataeans, who had also eyed it greedily. Similarly no one else in the region wanted the Ituraeans to have the place, and it had been protected from them at different times by both the Nabataeans and the Hasmoneans from Judaea – the Nabataeans had even ruled it for a time, before leaving by request. The city's geographical situation meant that whoever controlled the city had a base from which to reach out in several different directions; further, it was situated in the midst of what was in effect a great oasis, the Ghuta, watered by the perennial Barada River which was fed by the melting snows of the Lebanese mountains; and it was agriculturally very productive. All this has always made it a particular prize for Arabs from the desert. The city retains this wealth and strategic power even now; it became the imperial capital of the Arab Caliphate for a century after 661, and was the great prize in the Arab-Turkish-British fighting of 1917–1918. The overthrow of the Arab King Faisal by the French in Damascus in 1920 was the definitive end of his kingdom; in 1941 the capture of the city by the British marked the effective end of the Vichy French regime in Syria. It is one of the great prizes for which the factions in Syria's civil war have fought.

The city produced two cohorts for the Roman army. One, *cohors* I *Damascenorum milliaria sagittariorum*, served during its whole career in the Syrian region; the other, *cohors* I *Flavia Damascenorum equitata sagittariorum*, is recorded only in Germania Superior.

The difference in their names implies that they were not raised at the same time, quite apart from the fact that they were both numbered 'I'. The designation *Flavia*, of course, puts the origin of the second of these in all likelihood into Vespasian's reign, though it is not actually recorded until AD 90, by which time it was in Germany.[175] The other cohort, plain I *Damascenorum*, may well therefore have originated earlier than Vespasian's time, though once again it is not recorded until 86 and 87, and then in 90, by coincidence.[176] By that time it

had acquired the extra title *Armeniaca*, which implies that it had distinguished itself in fighting in Armenia, and this was presumably as a result of service in Corbulo's War there between 58 and 65. It seems unlikely to have been awarded such a title earlier than that, and there were certainly no Armenian wars between then and 90. The unit therefore must be presumed to have existed by the late 50s, and possibly for some time before that.[177] It may also have been recruited specifically for Corbulo's War.

In 90 the Flavian regiment was in Germania Superior. The date of its formation may, of course, have been at any time between 70 and 90. It was *milliaria*, a large unit, and *equitata*, and so with a substantial horsed contingent. It was also *sagittaria*. This was a skill which is not very useful in the German region, with its enclosing forests, so the unit's formation is likely to have been intended in the first place for local use in Syria, and the Jewish revolt of 66–70 may be assigned as the most obvious reason for its recruitment, perhaps originating as another of the embodied city militias. Its transfer to Germany may have been for the purpose of reinforcing the frontier after the Chattan War of Domitian in the 80s. Whatever the occasion for the transfer, the regiment remained in Germania Superior at least until the 130s. It is recorded there in diplomas in 117, 129/130, and 134.[178]

There are no diplomas from this province naming the regiment later than 134, but two of the men of the regiment in Germany are known. A centurion whose name is only partially known (Ti. Cl[ ]) presented a silver votive offering in the Dolichenum at Nida (Heddenheim, Frankfurt) at some time in the second century;[179] a veteran, Sextus Ursu, a former decurion, is named on an altar at the same place. The unit, however, seems to have been stationed closer to the frontier than Nida, at Friedburg, where a cavalryman's bronze helmet has been found, as has a dedication to Mars and Victoria by Soemus Severus, a *cornicularius* with a Syrian name, who may have been in the regiment.[180] Ursu's altar was dated to 227, which implies that the regiment was still in the region, a sojourn of about a century and a half (though since he was a veteran this cannot be taken as certain). Ursu may be an eastern name; it may also, perhaps more likely, be Latin for 'bear', possibly a personal nickname based on his physical characteristics.[181]

Cohors I *Damascenorum Armeniaca* was in Judaea from 86 to 90, according to the three diplomas from that place and period, and it stayed in Palestine for at least the next century, being recorded at fairly regular intervals until 186.[182] For some reason the prefect of the regiment was in Egypt during the second Jewish revolt, recorded there in 132/133 and 135;[183] his regiment was in Palestine in both 129 and 136,[184] and probably in 158,[185] so it is unlikely to have travelled to Egypt between those dates. Given that there was a war on in Judaea in those years it does seem highly unlikely that the Roman forces would have been reduced by posting away such a useful unit as an archer regiment; the commander was thus presumably in Egypt on official business.

On the other hand, several regiments from the Egyptian garrison were brought to Palestine for that war; it is possible that the Damascene regiment was moved to Egypt to recuperate. The use of Syrian regiments in the wars with

the Jews would be dangerous, since the Jews were disliked locally – there were several anti-Jewish riots in many parts of Syria as a result of the outbreak of the war – and Syrian enmity might well exacerbate Roman difficulties; regiments from more distant provinces might be less antagonistic. Applebaum listed the units 'which served, or probably served' in the war of 132–135, but the listing is always vague. For I *Damascenorum* he has supposed that 'it might have taken part in "mopping-up" operations'.[186]

Two soldiers of the regiment are known by name. Honainus, son of Zabdas, was discharged in Judaea in 86. He was from Philadelphia (Amman) and his date of discharge makes his enlistment take place at the latest in 61, which confirms the pre-Flavian (and possibly pre-Corbulo) origin of the unit.[187] The other soldier known by name is 'Papa Calli f.',[188] which is not very informative. Three or four of its prefects are recorded: one at Bergomum in northern Italy, one or two in Egypt, and one in Syria-Palestine;[189] only the last was actually in command of the regiment when his name is recorded – and, of course, these men, posted to command the regiment for a few years, can provide no information as to the personnel of the regiment or their origins.

On the other hand, several men of the Flavian regiment are known from the altar at Heddenheim. This is dated to 227, and the Syrian names recorded on it give some indication of continuing recruitment into the regiment from Syria. The unit had been continuously in Germania Superior since at least 90, and in 227 there were two men named on the altar whose names were Syrian – Soemus (certainly) and Sennaus (probably). The other names are of the less informative Latin sort – Frontinus and Sentius. But a man with a Syrian name serving late in the regiment's life, after it had been stationed in Germany for well over a century, implies that it was either recruiting in Syria or was being sent recruits from there.

Hama (Epiphaneia, Hamath)

The city of Epiphaneia on the Orontes was called Hamath by its Iron Age Syrian inhabitants, and this name has remained in use, shortened now to Hama, despite the royal Seleukid name of Epiphaneia which it was awarded in the 160s BC by King Antiochos IV Epiphanes. It is unlikely that the city ever contained many non-Syrian inhabitants, for its recognition as a *polis* came late in Seleukid history. It had been a major power centre in Syria in the Iron Age, and was one of those non-Greek Syrian places – Emesa, Hierapolis, and Jerusalem were others – which grew, or revived, under the pro-urban policies of the Seleukid kings, and which came to flourish under Rome's similar policy of encouraging city development. It was overshadowed by its southern neighbour Emesa from the first century BC, as it is today, but it participated early on in the expansion of agricultural settlement eastwards into the steppeland, and it was populous enough to be able to give its name to no less than three auxiliary regiments when Roman recruitment began, one *ala* and two cohorts.

The *ala* and one of the cohorts were both of normal size, about 500 men, but the other cohort was *milliaria* – a total of 2000 men from the city and its

territory; all three were, of course, posted to distant provinces. None give any indication in the names by which they were known of the date for their formation, and since Hama was never part of a kingdom we cannot use its annexation as an indicator of this. The cavalry unit existed by 88, but neither of the cohorts is recorded before the 120s, so either they were not recorded earlier or they did not exist earlier. The absence of an imperial dynastic signifier does tend to imply a pre-70 formation, but at what time they originated it is difficult to estimate. The locations of any unit before the reign of Nero, which is only from whose time that diplomas survive in significant numbers, is only known by chance.

It happens that two of these regiments, the *ala* I *Hamiorum saggitariorum*, and the *cohors* I *Hamiorum*, were both sent to provinces in which there was serious fighting from the 40s onwards, though there is no direct evidence for their presence so early. In Mauretania Tingitana, C. Suetonius Paulinus and Cn. Hosidius Geta had to campaign seriously towards and through the Atlas Mountains in 41–42; then in 43 a major expedition was launched to acquire Britannia, under the command of Aulus Plautius. In both places warfare took place repeatedly from then on, and both provinces also had external frontiers, so they therefore had to be both guarded and garrisoned by considerable forces. It would thus be appropriate if these *Hamiorum* regiments had been recruited as part of the military actions of the reigns of Caligula and Claudius. As it happens, the years 37–44 have been suggested for the origin of the *ala*,[190] but the basis for this is nothing more than the same guesswork I have used here.

The *ala* was recorded in Mauretania Tingitana repeatedly in a series of discharge diplomas from 88 to the 160s.[191] There are also a number of inscriptions which mention the unit, usually epitaphs for deceased former soldiers. Two men are recorded on diplomas as being discharged from the unit in 109. One of these was Bargas son of Zaeus, who came from Hama itself;[192] the other was C. Maesius Tertius.[193] There are earlier cases, but, since they are epitaphs, they are only approximately dated. One man, a *sesquiplicarius* called [ ]nius Dexter, died at Tingis, probably in the reign of Nero. He was thus probably recruited into the army in Claudius' reign or before if he reached his rank at the time of his death (at the age of fifty); so he was born about the end of Augustus' reign.[194] He was also a German (*natio [R]utenus*), so his first service may not have been in this Syrian archery unit; possibly he was transferred, along with others, to provide the backbone of a set of experienced non-commissioned officers at the origin of the new regiment; this in turn might suggest an origin for the regiment, again, in Claudius' reign (or before). These fragmentary indications tend to combine to imply an origin about AD 40 or thereabouts; on the other hand, the whole theory could disintegrate at the touch of just one record with a more definitive indication.

Along with the two dischargees of 109, two other men who died and were commemorated during Trajan's reign are known; Annius Afrinus, son of Abdas, was commemorated, along with his wife, Iulia Cessia, by the veteran Niger Monimus,[195] and the *imaginifer* Valerius Abdas, who came from Chalcis.[196] Abdas was a *signifer* in the regiment, and was commemorated by his brothers Valerius

Sabinus and Valerius Marinus, who, since the family came from Chalcis and the burial took place at the other end of the Mediterranean, were probably also in the regiment. Abdas is a Syrian name. The relative closeness of the deaths of Abdas and Afrinus in time, both in Trajan's reign, rather tells against the attractive notion that the two men were father and son, but both were clearly from Syria; similarly Monimus was a common name in Syria, as was Marinus. (The Chalcis from which Valerius and Abdas came might be either that in the Bekaa Valley or that in north Syria: the former was the closer to Hama, while the latter had its own regiments; the former might thus be the favourite.) These memorials were spread over a good part of Tingitana: Tingis, Tocolosida, and 'Oppidum Novum' (now el-Qasr or Qasr el-Kebir).[197]

In three of the diplomas, those from 103/104, 135, and 161, the regiment is additionally distinguished as *Syrorum* – 'of the Syrians'.[198] This was after the unit had been continuously in Tingitana for up to sixty years, so it was still being regarded by the bureaucrats who composed the diplomas as a unit of men from Syria. This could also imply, along with the evidence of the names of the men, that Syrians were being continually recruited for the regiment during all that time. So, whatever the practice was in the legions, the Syrian regiments were not recruiting – or not noticeably so – from the local population amongst whom they were posted. This may have been a regimental preference, or, less likely, an official directive to send recruits to a more distant regiment, away from their homelands, which would be a logical extension of the governmental practice of posting most such units away from their home provinces. In one aspect the empire could be described as composed of a series of military provinces which were occupied by 'foreign' forces from other imperial regions.

The two infantry cohorts from Hama were both sent as far away from home as their cavalry colleagues' *ala* – that is, as far as possible. *Cohors* I went to Britannia, *cohors* II to Africa, and both are attested in ways which throw some light on Roman army methods. *Cohors* I *Hamiorum* is attested on several diplomas dating between 122 and 158,[199] but also in a number of inscriptions whose dating somewhat extends that lifetime. It seems possible, as noted above, that the regiment could have been part of the invasion force in 43, or it could have arrived soon after that. It was listed in a diploma of 122, which is packed with the names of units, since the presence of the Emperor Hadrian in the province at the time, with his accompanying forces, greatly increased the Roman army there for a year or so.[200] By the 130s the regiment was in the north, stationed at the fort of Magnis (modern Carvoran) on Hadrian's Wall (which it had probably helped to build), halfway between the Irish and the North Seas, and at just about the highest point of the Wall.[201] It moved forward when the new Antonine Wall was constructed between the Forth and Clyde estuaries in the early 140s, and again its position was at about the midpoint of the whole system, at the fort of Bar Hill, near Kilsyth (and again it would have had to build the fort and probably part of the new Wall). It remained there until the 160s, when that line was also abandoned, and then it returned to Hadrian's Wall, once again occupying its original fort at Carvoran.

The inscriptions naming the unit give an outline of this history and fill in a few details. The fort at Carvoran was rebuilt in stone by parties from the legion II *Augusta* and the *Hamiorum* cohort, both of whom have left inscriptions marking their work. (The original fort, no doubt built by the cohort, had been of earth-and-timber construction.) The cohort's various centuries were named for their commanders in a series of stones – Claudius, Felix, Iulius Ca[ ], Prim[ ], Secundus, and Valerius Cassianus – these were probably the men supervising the original work.[202] A prefect of the regiment, T. Flavius Secundus, put up an altar in 136–138, probably to mark the completion of this rebuilding of the fort,[203] but also just in time for it to be abandoned in the move north. When the regiment moved to Bar Hill, another prefect, Caristanius Iustinianus, was in command; he was from a powerful family from Asia Minor, one of whose members had been the commander of a British legion (perhaps X *Hispana*) in the 70s.[204] Caristanius was commemorated in an altar which has been found there.[205] Another prefect, C. Iulius Marcellinus, was buried at the fort.[206]

The Bar Hill fort was sited at the highest point of the Antonine Wall, with extensive views to the north, east, and west (just as Carvoran was at one of the highest points of Hadrian's Wall). The *Hamiorum* cohort either shared in, or succeeded to, the occupation of the fort by the *cohors* I *Baetavorum*, which is attested by an inscription. The *Hamiorum*'s occupation, besides the inscriptions, may also be attested by the discovery of parts of bows and several arrowheads in the excavations which took place in 1902–1905.[207] When the cohort returned to Carvoran yet another prefect, Licinius Clemens, put up an altar to *Dea Syra*,[208] an indication that a connection with Syria still existed in the regiment a century and a quarter after its (presumed) arrival in Britain. The arrival of the part-Syrian family of the Severi on the imperial throne no doubt encouraged this identification further: the tribune M. Crescentius Domitianus, in temporary command of the regiment, put up another altar to *Dea Syra* at Carvoran, with a dedication to the Empress Iulia Domna,[209] and so at some time between 193 and 217, perhaps in 209–211 when she was in Britain along with her husband with the Roman expeditionary force.

The regiment therefore was still at Carvoran until after 200, but this dedication to the empress is the last notice of the regiment. Another stone from the fort at Carvoran displays the name of the *cohors* II *Delmatarum*, which had been in Britain at least since 105, but now appears at the wall for the first time.[210] *Cohors* I *Hamiorum* disappears. Its fate is not known. The fort at Carvoran has not yet been excavated (and in fact has been substantially destroyed) so there are no clues there. One must wonder if the regiment was destroyed in Severus' Caledonian campaign in 209–211, but evidence is absent; the source material does tend to dry up in the third century. It is worth noting that much of the troubles of the empire in the third century happened in the east, in Syria in particular, where the neighbouring Parthian kings were replaced by the much more vigorous and aggressive Sassanids; providing Syrian recruits for a regiment in Britannia may not have been an imperial priority, so it is possible that I *Hamiorum* simply faded

away, or perhaps was united with another regiment when it became too small in numbers to be viable. (This, of course, is only speculation.)

A recent geophysical survey of the Carvoran fort and its immediate surroundings has shown that there was a *vicus* attached to it, as there was at most of the wall forts. Several buildings lying along the Stanegate, the Roman road which ran along the south side of the fort, have been detected, including two substantial stone buildings, which anywhere else would merit a description as a 'villa' (as at Straubing, for instance), and there are others which are interpreted as workshops. For a regiment which was at the fort for a century, this was where some of its veterans would have retired to, and where the soldiers' families lived.[211]

The third of the regiments from Hama, *cohors* II *Hamiorum*, was, as noted earlier, posted to Africa. As usual with units in the African army it is recorded in a few diplomas in the late 120s,[212] and features in the inscribed account of Hadrian's *Adlocutio* in 128. The unit was at Theveste when the emperor inspected it, and it is possible this may have been its permanent station – or it may have been brought there to be displayed to the emperor. The emperor's appreciation of the regiment's expertise in archery and in battle – it put on a mock battle for him – was eloquent. His comments make it clear that the archers were expected to fight in the open, in defence of their position, and not merely from behind fortifications.[213]

Only one soldier of the regiment is known by name. Iulius Valerianus commemorated his seventy-year-old mother at Bou Sboa.[214] He would seem to have been recruited in the Flavian period, though the regiment is probably older than that. The occurrence of some records in Tripolitania, one of them a dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus at Ain Wif by the prefect of the regiment (who also commanded a vexillation of the legion III *Augusta*) dated to 201,[215] and another at Ain el-Avenia dated to 209–211,[216] might suggest that the regiment was moved to that area, or possibly this was the post of a detachment.

These two infantry regiments, unlike the cavalry *ala*, do not give any clear signs that they continued to be supplied with recruits from the original homeland of the regiment. The men who set up altars and so on in the north of England and southern Scotland tended to be the prefects of the unit, with names which only indicate their Roman citizenship, not their origins – except for particularly distinctive names like Caristanius. On the other hand, the presence of relics of archery equipment at Bar Hill does indicate that this was still an archers' regiment in the 160s and it seems very likely that replacements and reinforcements would come from the homeland where such skills were widely practiced.

It is difficult to discover what happened to all three of these regiments after about the year 200, for none of them is recorded as existing beyond the reign of Septimius Severus, who died in 211. The disappearance of *cohors* I from Britain is suggestive of its destruction; the *ala* in Mauretania Tingitana may have survived into the third century, but the Berber rebellion in the latter part of that century led to the abandonment of all but a small part of the province around Tingis itself from the 280s onwards. The regiment may not have survived that experience. None of them are recorded in the late-fourth-century *Notitia Dignitatum*.

Palmyra

The oasis of Palmyra had a relationship with Rome which must classify it as a client state for much of the first century AD. It first encountered Romans in the persons of a raid by Roman soldiers led by Mark Antony in 41 BC,[217] which is hardly the most pleasant introduction to Roman affairs (though perhaps it was not untypical of first encounters with Rome). From then on it was occasionally visited by Roman governors or officials, and seems at times to have had a Roman garrison. But it was well separated from the Roman province of Syria by a substantial stretch of desert, and its connection with that province was mainly through the client kingdom of Emesa at the end of its principal route to Syria and the Mediterranean, and this was also a distancing mechanism. With that kingdom's annexation into direct Roman rule in 72, however, the connection with Rome became inevitably and sensibly closer. But Palmyra was also linked with the Parthian kingdom, since it was one of the main trading links between Babylonia and Syria, so the city was able to play off one empire against the other to some degree – it was also geographically as close to Babylonia as to Syria. Roman wars against Parthia, particularly Trajan's war in 114–117, however, brought the desert city under increasing Roman control. By the reign of Nero the city could be reckoned to be more or less inside the Roman state and by that of Hadrian it was properly integrated, but still retained more autonomy than most cities, in part a function of its situation in the Syrian desert.[218]

One of the elements which tended towards preserving Palmyrene autonomy was the fact that the trading caravans sent out by the city's merchants were guarded by Palmyrene troops, recruited in the city, or among Syrians, or from the Arabs of the desert – the city was self-consciously Arab, as its gods, its architecture, and the names of its people clearly show. The soldiers whom the city recruited were usually archers, so that, as the city was enclosed into the Roman embrace, these men were also (or instead) increasingly recruited into the Roman forces. There is evidence for two or perhaps three Palmyrene regiments, one of which dates from Trajan's reign, and another from the third century.

An *ala* I *dromadariorum Palmyrenorum* is recorded in a single inscription honouring its commander. The date is vaguely in the second half of the second century, but the commander was a Roman citizen, Ti. Claudius P[ ].[219] This is evidently a Roman regiment, but one which was both recruited and stationed at its home city of Palmyra. This would be unusual, but perhaps not so in Palmyra where such a unit would be used for the express purpose of patrolling the desert routes, and protecting the valuable caravans – valuable both to the merchants and to the tax-collecting Roman state. There is also an *ala* I *Ulpia dromadariorum Palmyrenorum milliaria*, which may or may not be the same unit, though the designation 'Ulpia' suggests a later formation. It is recorded in two discharge diplomas, one from the Arabian province, dated 141/142, and one from Syria of 156/157.[220] On the whole it seems probable that these two, with such similar names, were one and the same. Its name indicates that it was raised

by Trajan, no doubt like similar units from the former Nabataea, in preparation for the Parthian War.

The regiment was, from its name, a camel-borne unit, though since it was *ala* it was not partly infantry as has been supposed. It may have been partly horsed and partly camel-borne, though the two animals do not like each other, and are antagonistic unless specially trained to be tolerant – a task which was well within the capabilities of Roman horse-trainers, or those of Palmyra.[221]

Various items of evidence which survive also suggest that this unit was stationed in Syria throughout its known existence (which, to be sure, is not long). There is a dedication from Palmyra (not surpisingly), a votive offering found at Bostra, and a *graffito* recorded from Medain Saleh, a long-term Nabataean and Roman frontier post in northwest Arabia.[222] None of these are dated, and the names on them are Latin, evidently referring to a group of officers. The spread of evidence would imply that, as would be expected for a mounted unit, it was active over a large part of Syria and Arabia. The *graffito* at Medain Saleh, like the record of the names of soldiers of *ala* I *Commagenorum* at Talmis in Egypt, are mainly Latin – Severus, 'Kassi' (Cassius), Oulpia, Demetrios, Oulpianus, all of them classified as officers, so these are not specific to any reign.

The curiously numbered *cohors* XX *Palmyrenorum* is first recorded in a dedication to the Severan imperial family dated to 203.[223] Apart from this one inscription, every other notation of the regiment comes from the Roman outpost of Dura-Europus on the middle Euphrates, which was one of the termini of the Palmyrene tracks from the city towards Babylonia. The regiment formed part of the garrison there until the city was conquered by the Sassanids in 256, after which the regiment (and the city) disappeared. It had therefore presumably originated during Septimius Severus' victorious Parthian Wars in the 190s (as we may assume) and it died in this later defeat. Its curious numbering is not explained; it can scarcely be that there were another nineteen Palmyrene cohorts, and the garrison of Syria did not rate as many as nineteen non-Palmyrene cohorts and *alae* at any time.

The evidence for the regiment consists largely in records of papyri recovered during the excavations of Dura-Europus, and in some inscriptions. As one would expect many of the soldiers had Syrian or Arab names, though none of them provides evidence of their homes. Probably most came from Palmyra or from different parts of Syria. Considerable numbers of the men had Greek names; the officers tended to have Roman names, and neither of these can give any indication of their origins.[224]

Since their lives were spent entirely in Syria, these Palmyrene units do not really concern this study, though it is worth noting that, apart from the new regiments recruited by Trajan, there was still apparently plenty of scope for new recruits to be collected in Syria well into the second century AD, and even, if the *cohors* XX *Palmrenorum* is an example, into the third.

On the other hand, the other Palmyrene regiment, the *numerus Palmyrenorum*, provides rather less evidence of its existence than XX *Palmyrenorum*, though more than the other Palmyrene regiments. It was posted to Dacia, and there

it had some local effect. It was also a regiment with a comparatively long life. A *numerus* was a unit usually recruited from outside the imperial boundaries, which may imply that Palmyra was not reckoned as a Roman place at the time, though this may have simply been a convenient description, implying that men were recruited from the surrounding desert lands. There are two diplomas which record discharges of men of the unit, one of the year 120 and the other of 126.[225] It seems that the troops were recruited for a six-year engagement, and the dates of these diplomas indicate an original formation of the regiment in 113 or 114. This was the year Trajan began his Parthian War, and a second recruitment installment came in 119 or 120, according to the second diploma. With the end of the fighting against Parthia in 117 the regiment went to Dacia, and when the original soldiers' engagements were over, more men were recruited, no doubt as replacements of those taking their discharge; no doubt also plenty of the original recruits reenlisted. The regiment gradually changed into a regular unit of the army, and is recorded at several places in Dacia until the mid-third century. Its base was probably at Tibiscum, where dedications and an epitaph have been recorded. Recruitment for the regiment from Syria went on even into the third century, as indicated by the names of the two soldiers recorded on a plaque from Sarmezigetuza: Abraemus Flava M[ ] and Maximus Barsamaeus,[226] and by an *armorum custos* of the regiment, Aelius Zabdibabel at Tibiscum.[227] Dedications to Palmyrene gods are also indications of the regiment's and of its men's home loyalty: Aelius Zabdibabel made a dedication to Bel of Palmyra, the veteran P. Aelius to Deus Malachbel, and an anonymous dedication was to *deus patris*.[228]

The *numeri* of the Roman army have been studied and catalogued in an article by Patricia Southern in *Britannia*.[229] She lists the various regiments, but seems to take too literally the varied names given them. Five separate instances of *numeri Palmyrenorum* are listed, but these are all from Dacia, with differing surnames – *Optantianorum*, *Porollisensius*, and *Tibiscensis*. These are all named from places in Dacia, but the unit at *Optantiana* is scarcely attested at all except by a heavily interpreted inscription,[230] and it may be disregarded; that at Tibiscum, as noted earlier, is well attested by epitaphs and dedications; that at Porolissus on one stone only.[231] It is best to see all these (if *Optantianorum* is to be included) as one unit, detachments of which were sent out from the main base at Tibiscum.

Two other regiments of Palmyrene *numeri* are as well attested as that at Tibiscum. In Egypt was the *Hadrianorum Palmyrenorum sagittariorum*. It was recruited soon after the withdrawal from Trajan's eastern conquests, and is noted also in 216 in dedications at Coptos and in 271 in a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus recording the delivery of supplies to it; this unit may also be the *ala* VIII *Palmyrenorum* which is listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the end of the fourth century.[232]

The third Palmyrene *numerus* unit, another *numerus Palmyrenorum*, was posted to Numidia. It is recorded at three sites, Messad (the Roman Dimmidi), el-Gahra, and el-Kantara (Calceus Herculis), all of which occupied positions dominating approaches from the desert to the north towards the wealthy coastlands.[233] The dating of these instances is disputed, but one inscription, of the reigns of Alexander Severus and Gordian III, is fairly clear. The date of the unit's origin is

therefore uncertain, but the second century seems probable, and given the origins of the other two Palmyrene *numeri*, the reign of Hadrian seems the most likely.[234]

It is not certain that this regiment's locations were successive. As in Dacia it is quite possible that detachments were sent out to various subsidiary forts – indeed, given the sparse inhabitation of the desert edge, concentrating a whole regiment in one place would seem to be unlikely. The post at Messad/Dimmidi is thought to have been abandoned by 238, and the regiment's post at el-Gahra was abandoned in the next year, but it is perhaps best to assume that detachments were sent to other subsidiary posts as well. (238 was, of course, a fraught year in Africa; movements of soldiers took place for more reasons than shifting them to new posts; the local legion III *Augusta* was disbanded, a process which no doubt strongly affected the auxiliary forces as well.) The quantity of epitaphs from el-Kantara implies that the regiment was established there for some time.[235] It is regarded as one of the primary strategic positions of the region, controlling a pass through the mountains which the nomads would use. One man buried there was Gaddes, son of Iergeus, a good Palmyrene name,[236] and one of its commanders was a Palmyrene called Agrippa.[237]

The infantry regiments recruited from Palmyra and its surroundings were therefore four: one cohort, which was destroyed in the conquest of Dura-Europus, and three *numeri*, who were dispatched, probably almost as soon as they were recruited, to distant provinces: Egypt, Dacia, and Numidia. This was a substantial extraction of manpower from what was, despite its fame and wealth, a relatively small city. The great majority of the recruits therefore probably came from other parts of Syria, and from the Arabs of the desert.

Samaria-sebaste

Alexander the Great had planted a group of Macedonian colonists at Samaria in Palestine, and the city later became a centre for the Jewish sect of the Samaritans. It was destroyed after a long Maccabean siege in 109–108 BC: the Maccabees chose to regard the Samaritans as heretics, but they had an equal animus towards any Greek city. A new city was established in much the same spot by Herod, and called Sebaste in honour of the Emperor Augustus. It was in a strategic position, blocking the route north from Judaea to the Vale of Jezreel, and it defied the Jewish rebels in the war of 66–70.

Two regiments were formed from the city's population, the *ala Sebastena* and the *cohors* I *Sebastena*. The earliest appearance of both of these regiments is on discharge diplomas from Syria dated 88.[238] This dating and situation, together with the origin of both of the units, draws attention to the Jewish War so recently ended. References in Josephus to Sebastean units show that the city fielded an actively anti-Jewish force, and at one point it is said to be 3000 strong.[239] The link between this force, attested before 66 on several occasions, and the later Sebastean regiments known from 88 onwards, is not proven, but it is surely highly probable. The pre-66 regiments are stated to be a squadron and five cohorts, which could well amount to 3000 men, on the assumption that as militia regiments

they were not necessarily of the standard Roman size; Josephos, for purposes of his own, may also be exaggerating. Their precise status, however, is not clear. It is uncertain if they were official Roman forces, or were the embodied militia of the city and region of Sebaste. At one point in Claudius' reign the emperor ordered them to be removed to Pontus because some of the soldiers had insulted Herodian princesses, but the men petitioned him, and he relented, having made his point.[240] This might be unlikely behaviour for a unit of the professional army, but it could well be a typical reaction of citizens threatened with removal from their homes. (The behaviour of Roman soldiers in Judaea was, however, often less than correct, and on several occasions unpleasantly provocative, as was the conduct of some of the governors – of course, the mere presence of Roman soldiers in Judaea was seen as provocative by many of the Jews.)

Josephus does not mention the Sebastean troops during the war of 66–70, which is curious, whether they were Roman or local forces, but then he rarely distinguishes between Roman forces, legions, and *auxilia*. In either case they were surely used, even if only in a merely garrison capacity, or as a backstop for regular units. The subsequent Roman need for more troops to fill up the ranks of their army after the fighting between 66 and 73 (and earlier) would suggest that they were recruited into the official army after the war. The *ala Sebastena* was *Flavia*, but it was also *Pia*, which implies loyalty of a notable kind, and *Gemina*, which would normally mean that it had been joined with another unit to form a single regiment; it was so designated in the 90s.[241] Possibly both of the constituent units had suffered losses in the war and were then rebuilt as one.

The *cohors* I *Sebastena* is recorded as simply that in 88, but by 139 it was *milliaria*.[242] If the first case is not an omission then the regiment was expanded in size, perhaps in Trajan's time. The cohort remained in Syria or Syria-Palestina as long as we can trace it. There are more or less regular references to it in diplomas until 186.[243] One of its prefects became an official at Dura-Europos,[244] which would be after the conquest by Severus in 194, but this scarcely advances the history of the regiment beyond the date of the last diploma, and it does not prove the regiment's presence there, only the prefect's. The continued presence of the regiment in its home province (though its precise location is not known) is perhaps a recognition of the conspicuous loyalty of the city and its regiment towards Rome and its emperors.

The *ala Sebastena* is noted in diplomas in 88, 91, and 93 in Syria,[245] but by 152 it was in Mauretania Caesariensis, and there are several dated references to it during the next century.[246] Most of the inscriptions – there are no more diplomas – are from Cherchel, the Roman Caesarea, the seat of the governor of the province, and they mainly name prefects of the *ala* or other officers; only one soldier and one veteran are known by name.[247] Two officers have names of Libyan origin,[248] hardly surprising after the regiment's sojourn in the province for over a century, but suggestive of local recruitment. The regiment's station in Mauretania is difficult to locate; perhaps the concentration of inscriptions from Caesarea implies that it was stationed there, though this may be where the retired soldiers went to; but it is also recorded on a building inscription from Kherba

Ouled Hallel, and one of its men died and was buried at Quiza; either or both of these may be its later station, or those of detachments.[249]

The retention of both of these units in the homeland for some time is not perhaps unusual, given the potentially unsettled condition of Syria after the wars of 66–73, and the manifest loyalty to Rome of the people of Sebaste, nor is the posting of one of them to a distant province. But the retention of a unit such as the cohort in its homeland permanently is certainly unusual. The flimsy evidence for the *ala* suggests that it refreshed itself by recruiting locally rather than receiving reinforcements from Syria.

Tyre

The ancient Phoenician city of Tyre seems as curious a place as Antioch to have produced a regiment of archers, *cohors* I *Tyriorum sagittariorum*, but it did include a substantial inland area of the Lebanese mountains within its *chora*, which is the same terrain which produced five Ituraean regiments of archers, and this is presumably where the recruits mainly came from. The first record of the I *Tyriorum* regiment is in a diploma from Moesia Inferior dated 75.[250] It may therefore be presumed that, like so many Syrian regiments, it was embodied as a result of the Jewish revolt of 66–70. Tyre had long been a notorious enemy of Jewish power, and the city, like its neighbour Berytus to the north, would be an obvious place for a militia to be embodied for use in that war. Formal recruitment before or after the fighting is likely; the absence of the signifier *Flavia* rather implies embodiment before the war, or at least at its beginning.

It was sent to Moesia Inferior before 99, and two diplomas record it there in that year and the next.[251] It remained in Moesia, probably at a fort on the Danube, until after 116, when a diploma shows it still there.[252] It was moved into Dacia Inferior between that date and 129, and was there in 146[253] and when the last surviving diploma of the province was produced in 167/168.[254] The regiment was therefore not apparently used in the Dacian wars of Domitian or Trajan, unless it took part in the invasions and was then returned to its Moesian fort. No soldiers are known by name. One prefect of the regiment is known from a diploma – L. Rutilius Ranoncianus in 107[255] – and three epitaphs of other prefects survive, men from Perugia in Italy (C. Atilius Glabrio), from Salonae in Dalmatia, and from Antioch-in-Pisidia.[256] None of these tell us much about the cohort other than that it seems to have been first posting for all of these men.

It has been suggested that I *Tyriorum* may be the same unit as I *Ituraeorum*,[257] but the frequency of the former's appearance in the diplomas – nine times – rather squashes that idea. No trace of the unit can be found after 167/168.

III. Other Syrian regiments

Apart from the regiments detailed in Parts I and II of this chapter, which are specific to a city or region, there are also a dozen or so regiments whose designation is usually *Syrorum* or something similar, or which can be argued to have originated

in Syria on other grounds. Not all of these are well authenticated, nor are the arguments for Syrian origin always convincing, and their names in the records tend to alter as time passed, but some account of most of them can be constructed. I will deal with them roughly in the chronological order by their first appearance in the record, though this may not be the actual date or order of their formation.

'Coh Silau'

A single reference to *co silau* in an inscription has stimulated the suggestion that the term should be expanded to *cohors Silaucensium*.[258] The only record of it is an epitaph from Mors-Asberg, the Roman Asciburgium, between the legionary bases at Vetera and Novaesium in Germania Inferior, opposite the junction of the Rivers Rhine and Ruhr. The epitaph is for Ti. Iulius Sbebdas son of Caretas, from Tyre. It is perhaps the man's origin which has prompted the inclusion of the regiment in a list of Syrian units. It could be argued that the name is a corruption or a misspelling of *Seleucaeorum*, and so the regiment could be argued to have originated from Seleukeia-in-Pieria. It might also be a contraction for a personal name on the pattern of the Ituraean *cohors Sabina* in Egypt; the date of Sbebdas' epitaph is roughly the same as the record from Egypt, the early first century AD. This, it must be said, is an unusually early date for the existence of a city regiment from Syria. The term may similarly be a reference to a legionary cohort such as those recorded on Hadrian's Wall, or in the Egyptian papyri.

The existence of the cohort as an independent auxiliary regiment must be very doubtful. The stone is dated to the reign of Claudius, but the *ala Frontoniana* can be located at Asciburgium by that time, so *coh silau* was not there.[259] The origin of a single soldier is not really sufficient to demonstrate the origin of the whole regiment when its name is so obscure, nor can a single abbreviated (and probably misunderstood and almost certainly misspelled) word be sufficient to prove a regiment's existence. It must be concluded that, in the absence of further evidence, this regiment probably never existed; if it did, it still is not proven to have had a Syrian origin.

Cohors **I** *Surorum sagittaria*

There is a sequence of three cohorts, numbered I to III, all archer regiments, all supposed to have been recruited in Syria, and all of which can be argued to have been embodied early in the imperial period. I will group them here as a set under the (questionable) assumption that they may well have been more or less contemporary in their beginnings.

As simply *cohors* I *sagittariorum* with *Syrorum* added later – or these may have been alternatives – there are early records of soldiers of the regiment who were buried and memorialised at Bingium (Bingen) on the Rhine. Of the five men whose names are known, four were from Syria (two were *Suros*, one was from Tripolis, one from Sidon) and one came from Crete. These, and another man, were all, according to their lengths of service and the dating of their epitaphs,

recruited in the reigns of Augustus or Tiberius.[260] An epitaph for the daughter of a soldier of the regiment at Mogontiacum is of Tiberius' reign, which implies that the soldier himself enlisted during Augustus' reign,[261] and that the regiment therefore certainly existed as early as that period. Presuming that the regiment was stationed at Bingium and Mogontiacum at that time, it was then removed to Mauretania Caesariensis. This land was not annexed until Caligula's annoyed impulsive killing of King Ptolemy in AD 40; where the regiment was before Mogontiacum is not known, but Syria would be a reasonable guess, recruited by Augustus, who was also responsible for recruiting other regiments in Syria. At least one epitaph of a soldier of the regiment, C. Iulius Dapnas, has been found at Caesarea in Mauretania and is dated to about the reign of Claudius. Having served thirty years, he also had been recruited in Augustus' reign or perhaps in Tiberius';[262] his cognomen Dapnas is possibly Syrian.

In 127 the regiment was in Africa, and is recorded there on two diplomas of that year.[263] The regiment is recorded as building at Ain el-Avenia and Gheria al-Gharbia in Tripolitania, at the first place late in the reign of Septimius, at the second in 240;[264] in the second inscription the regiment is *Gordiana*, which might suggest an involvement in the African insurrection against the Emperor Maximinus Thrax in 238, and its award of an honorary title. The tribune Numisius Maximus, identified as commanding the cohort, was responsible for building at Qasr Duib in 245.[265]

The regiment thus served in North Africa, in the African and in the Caesariensis provinces, for two centuries, eventually being part of the forward defences deep in the desert in Tripolitania. It cannot be traced beyond the middle of the third century.

Cohors **II** *Syrorum milliaria equitata sagittariorum cives Romanorum*

A man from this regiment was discharged in 88, and so had been recruited in 63. He was from Philadelphia which, since this unit was explicitly Syrian, was probably the Philadelphia in the Decapolis, the modern Amman.[266] The coincidence in date of his recruitment with Corbulo's War may suggest an active recruiting drive in Syria at the time – he was not the only such recruit – though it does not necessarily imply that the regiment originated at that time. If its number was part of a sequence, it was probably originally recruited in Augustus' reign.

The regiment was moved to Mauretania Tingitana where it is recorded in a long series of diplomas from 88 until at least 162,[267] and probably later: fifteen diplomas in all. It has been suggested that it was reduced from *milliaria* to *quingenaria* after 122, but it is still recorded as *milliaria* in 140 and 153.[268] The reduction, it was suggested, was done by splitting off the cohort's horsed section into an *ala Syrorum*, which was based at Sala, but the diplomas of 153 put paid to that theory.[269] Apart, therefore, from the regiment's continued existence until after the 160s, there is little more to say about it. No individuals, soldiers or officers, are known by name.

Cohors III *sagittariorum*

This is a regiment of archers in which one Syrian soldier is known to have served. It is thought to have been recruited in Syria, an assumption based on the origin of this soldier and the fact that it was an archer regiment, but there is no proof beyond those details. It was certainly in existence by Tiberius' reign, when that soldier, an Ituraean called Molaeus son of Sanutus, was buried at Mogontiacum in Germania Superior.[270] In Claudius' reign we know of a prefect of the regiment, and of another a little later, perhaps in Nero's reign.[271] Beyond that time the regiment cannot be traced. This last known prefect, C. Munatius Bassus, in fact moved from the command of III *Sagittariorum* to that of II *Asturum* in a way which suggests that III *Sagittariorum* may well have been disbanded.[272] As a unit recruited in Syria this must be regarded as a very dubious case, but tending towards acceptability.

Ala I *Flavia Agrippiana saggitariorum and Ala* II *Flavia Agrippiana miniata*

These two units may be Syrian in origin, but they do not fit in with the geographical classification adopted earlier. Everything about these regiments is a problem, beginning with whether there were one or two of them. An *ala Agrippiana* is recorded on a diploma from Britannia of 122,[273] but never in that province again. Another is recorded on Syrian diplomas of 129.[274] A soldier of the *ala* was buried at Worms in Germania Superior in the first century,[275] and a sub-prefect from Grenoble recorded his service in the unit, also in the first century.[276] After 129 it is recorded thrice more in Syria, in diplomas of 144 and 156/157, and again in the third century at Palmyra.[277] This geographical spread of the source evidence only compounds the confusion.

It is most economical to assume that, ignoring the prefect's memorial at Grenoble, which was probably set up at his home and has no relationship to the unit's station, these all refer to the same regiment, which served in the first century in Germania, went to Britannia with Hadrian on his visit in 122 but stayed there only briefly, presumably for the duration of emperor's presence, and was then sent to Syria, where it was by 129 and where it stayed until the third century. On the other hand, while it is easy to find a reason for it to go to Britannia in 122 (there had been some trouble there, and it was, after all, an imperial visit, when the building of the Wall was authorised), it is more difficult to justify sending it to Syria in the next few years, unless some trouble was apprehended. It cannot be the Jewish revolt, since that only began in 132.

Then there is the problem of the name. The earliest references in Germania at Worms are simply to *ala Agrippiana* without qualification. In Britain it has an additional name *miniata*, meaning something like 'the red'. In the Palmyrene inscription it is *ALA FL AGR* – that is, *Flavia* – and in an inscription from Thyateira in Asia it is II *FL.*[278] This can all be reconciled if one assumes that the

title *Flavia* was awarded, or was adopted, by a regiment which already existed, perhaps as a result of an action taken by Vespasian. The II could be a clerical decision to distinguish it from some other cohort – but this is all stretching the evidence to fit, and is generally less than convincing.

It is the origin of the name *Agrippiana* which is the most puzzling aspect. Several suggestions have been made,[279] but the Flavian connection may be the best clue. The best-known Agrippas in the first century AD were two Jewish kings, Agrippa I (king, 37–44) and Agrippa II (king from about 50 onwards until between 90 and 100). Both of these men had armies, and Agrippa II in particular sent a substantial cavalry force to try to suppress the early stages of the great Jewish revolt in 66.[280] His kingdom was in a difficult area; it included parts of Ituraea, and in particular the area of desert and contorted rocks south of Damascus, Trachonitis, which had harboured bandits earlier; it seems to have been considered that they were best controlled by the use of cavalry. Agrippa I had also had an army, though we have no details.[281]

The only soldier of the regiment known by name was a Treveran, from northern Gaul, who was buried at Worms. It is suggested that he was recruited in Tiberius' reign and died, after thirteen years of service, during Claudius' reign. This is only very approximate dating, but he was certainly a soldier in the regiment by Claudius' time, and so the regiment evidently already existed well before the Flavian period; it may well have been in Germania at the time, though it is possible that the Treveran was at home when he died rather than with his regiment.

A possible history of the regiment would therefore be that it was first recruited as a cavalry force of Gallic, German, or Thracian mercenary horsemen by Agrippa I, which was later taken into the Roman forces as the *ala Agrippiana* when the king died in 44; this unit would have included the Treveran from Worms as a soldier, and by assuming he was a mercenary we can get round his awkward origin in an apparently Syrian regiment. Another army was recruited by Agrippa II once he became king in 50, which was used first by him and then by the Romans at Jerusalem in and after 66. After the Jewish revolt was over the two regiments could have been united and then transferred to Germania, whence Hadrian took it to Britannia in 122, by which time it had received the nickname *miniata*, presumably to distinguish it from other regiments, in particular from its fellow regiment of the same name. It was then sent back to Syria a little later. Its absence from the province for the previous half-century would have dulled any memories of its role in the revolt and its suppression which may have lingered on locally. It stayed in Syria from then on. This is, however, all rather speculative.

The history of *ala* II cannot be even attempted; it is not certain that it ever existed (though it may be best to argue that for a time both regiments existed, descended from the armies of the two kings, and were then united later). The appearance of *ala Agrippiana* in 122 and later without a numerical designator implies that *ala* II no longer existed; amalgamation might be the best solution to the issue.

Cohors I *Ulpia sagittariorum equitat*

Again, as with cohorts I–III, there were two cohorts with similar designations, numbered I and II, which suggest recruitment by Trajan; they may again be grouped together here.

First recorded in a diploma of 124,[282] this regiment, from its name, was raised in Trajan's reign (unless, of course, it was older and given that honorific by the emperor). Presumably the purpose was to have more horsed archers for the intended Parthian War. The regiment continued in existence until 163 when it is recorded in an inscription,[283] but is not recorded thereafter. The three records all show that the regiment was stationed in Syria, which must make it doubtful that it was raised there, yet its composition as horsed archers does suggest a Syrian origin. Maybe by Trajan's reign it was assumed that the dangers of Syrian enmity had faded – the annexation of Nabataea, the last client kingdom, and Roman control of Palmyra having removed the possibility of a native Syrian army being used to spark a revolt.

Cohors II *Ulpia equitata civium Romanorum sagittariorum*

From its name this was another regiment raised by Trajan and, since, like *cohors* I, it served its entire career in Syria, no doubt this took place about 114 or before in preparation for the Parthian War. As II *Ulpia equitata*, or variations on this, it is recorded on the diploma of 129[284] and on several inscriptions at Dura-Europus between 193 and 251.[285] Its full name appears on a building inscription, also from Dura, but undated.[286] The combination of a regiment of archers and its station in Syria suggests the regiment's origin there.

Four officers of various grades are known by name, all in records from Dura, but none of them are of any specific origin, though one dedication has also been found at Marseilles.[287] The name of one soldier, Abdaeus Mocimus, is known, and he was clearly a Syrian or an Arab. The history of the regiment is therefore straightforward, in so far as it can be known. Recruited under Trajan, it remained in Syria until the conquests of Septimius in the east, after which it formed part of the garrison at Dura. No doubt the conquest and destruction of that city by the Sassanids in 256 resulted also in the destruction of the regiment.

Cohors I *Aelia sagittariorum milliaria equitata*

C*ohors* I's signifier *Aelia* marks it as recruited first by Hadrian. It was a regiment which accumulated imperial recognitions, being at various times *Severiana*, *Antoniniana*, and *Gordiana*, while *Aelia* was often dropped in later years. Its geographical origin is never stated, but the combination of archery and a mounted element tends to suggest recruitment in Syria; this is therefore assumed here.

The regiment was stationed in Pannonia Superior, where it is recorded in four diplomas between 133 and 149, but also in inscriptions of 159 and 240.[288] It was stationed, it seems, at Klosterneuburg, which is normally reckoned to be

just inside Pannonia, and where numerous records of its presence have been found.[289] None of the names of the soldiers at Klosterneuburg or in the area show any signs of being Syrian.

In the reign of Gordian III and Philip the Arab the regiment was at Turnu Severin in Dacia,[290] guarding the great bridge across the Danube built by Trajan over a century before. How long it stayed there is not known, but Dacia was abandoned twenty years after Philip's reign; no further trace of the regiment can be found.

The regiment's movements thus seem reasonably clear: recruited in Syria in Hadrian's reign, stationed in Pannonia Superior in the second and early third centuries, and finally on guard at the Drobeta bridge. Its connection with Syria was lost fairly quickly, certainly soon after it had moved to Pannonia; it did not even carry with it the Syrian gods.

Numerus Surorum sagittariorum

A unit with this name is attested in Dacia in 138, where its men were involved in building at Arutela and Radineste; tiles stamped with its title (as *N S Sagittarior*) come also from Slavene;[291] in undated inscriptions two men of the unit made a dedication to Sol Invicta at Romula.[292] So we may be clear that the regiment existed and was in Dacia by 138, and that it had probably been there for some time. Its name makes it clear that it was recruited originally in Syria. Its sister unit *numerus Palmyrenorum* was recruited about 114; this date would clearly suit the formation of *Surorum* as well, as one of several new units recruited by Trajan for his eastern war.

Numerus Syrorum is attested in Mauretania Caesariensis, and gave its name to the place where it camped in the west of the province, where it might have been placed to control the route to Tingitana. There are milestones naming it, suggesting that it had been present there for some time.[293] It is also called *numerus Syrorum Mevensium* (from its former residence in Dacia) in one inscription from Cherchel.[294] (The reference to Dacia may be nostalgia, or, more likely – did the Roman army go in for nostalgia? – it was a means of distinguishing the unit from other *numeri*.) The only date for the unit in the province is 272.[295] The tombstone of a former prefect of the '*numerus Syriaca*', found at Seville in Spain,[296] would perhaps fit with the Mauretanian regiment rather than one in Dacia, though his unit was certainly *sagittaria*.

It is possible to argue for the existence of either one or two regiments of *numeri*, one in Dacia, one in Caesariensis; but the dating of these two are well separated, though those we have are few. It is known that Septimius Severus was very active in reorganising the military position in Mauretania, so on balance it is best to assume that the two units were actually one, recruited by Hadrian, stationed in Dacia after Trajan's War, and transferred to Mauretania by Septimius in the course of his reorganisation. It may be noted that the name of the unit in the inscription from Cherchel – *Mevensium* – is very reminiscent of the Caesariensis reference; Dacia was being abandoned, and the unit could have been transferred as a result.

Cohors I *Nova Severiana Surorum milliaria sagittariorum equitata*

The complex name of this regiment makes it difficiult to discern its precise history. One inscription which seems to record it uses the abbreviation *CH AUR N SA* (that is, *cohors Aureliana nova sagittariorum*) which may suggest the regiment's original name.[297] The date of 175 or so has been suggested for this record, though proof does not exist.[298] It was therefore probably originally a normal *quingenaria equitata* unit, but being *nova* implies that it had been altered in some way, and so it had a history before it became *Severiana*. It was *milliaria* later (dated references are few) and it may be reasonable to connect its 'newness' and its enlargement with its designation as *Severiana*. It is not clear whether this is a reference to Septimius Severus or to Alexander Severus, but there are two dedications from the regiment to Alexander Severus and his mother Iulia Mammaea at Szent Endre in Pannonia Superior,[299] so it possibly happened in his reign. This place, the fort of Ulcisia Castra, was probably the regiment's station, and there are several inscriptions noting it in other forts along the Danube as far as Intercisa.[300] There is also evidence of some bricks and tiles stamped with letters which could indicate that the regiment's work took place also at Drobeta and Romula in Dacia, perhaps the work of detachments.

The only evidence of the Syrian origin of the regiment is in its name, but this must be decisive, and perhaps its status as an archery regiment, which can, of course, be no more than indicative. Presumably it was originally raised in the east, and presumably in or before the reign of Marcus Aurelius, though this could be later. One possible occasion would be the need for more troops to fight Lucius Verus' Parthian War, though both Septimius Severus and Caracalla fought, or intended to fight, Parthian Wars, as did Alexander Severus. The date of 175 might imply some connection with the attempted usurpation of of Avidius Cassius, or its suppression. The only later dated reference to it is in 230;[301] the regiment probably disappeared in the confusion of warfare and military reoganisation later in the third century. There are no men named as members, and so there is no indication of the manning of the unit.

Ala II *Septimia Surorum cives Romanorum*

It has been suggested that this regiment was formed in Mauretania by separating the foot and horsed sections of *cohors* II *Surorum milliaria* into a quingenary infantry cohort and this *ala*. It is certainly not known of earlier than 144 (though that cannot be decisive), but since the original cohort is still called *milliaria* and *equitata* in 153, this division cannot be accepted.

The regiment acquired the extra title of Septimia and became itself *milliaria* by 219 (and 'Septimia' means this happened before 211, since it must refer to Septimius), when this is noted on a statue base found at Carnuntum on the Danube, though there is no sign the regiment itself with there.[302] A possible indication of the upgrading comes in an inscription in memory of a man who died in

Mauretania while conducting a group of Thracian recruits to Tingitana. There is actually no direct connection between these recruits and the regiment, but the man died in Septimius' reign and the regiment did expand about the same time, and the recruits who were brought in to double the size of the regiment must have come from somewhere. Even if the Thracians did not join this particular regiment, their transfer is a clear indication of the mechanism by which the original Syrian-ness of the unit and others like it would be progressively diluted.[303]

Alternatively, of course, the *ala* could have been *milliaria* all along. The evidence for the regiment is, it must be insisted, no more than two items, dated 144 and 219; this is a very small base on which to build elaborate speculations (such as those here indulged in).

This group of poorly recorded, or nearly anonymous, regiments, therefore, can be ordered as follows, by their dates of origin as suggested above:

Augustus' reign – *Cohors* I *Syrorum sag*
Cohors II *Syrorum mil eq c.R.*
Cohors III *sag*
Cohors II *Classica*

Trajan's reign – *Cohors* I *Ulpia sag eq*
Cohors II *Ulpia eq c.R. sag*

Hadrian's reign – *Cohors* I *Aelia sag mil eq*
Numerus Syrorum

Marcus' reign? – *Cohors* I *nova Severiana Syrorum mil sag eq* (formerly *Aureliana*)

Septimius' reign – Ala II Septimia Syrorum c.R.

(Not Syrian – *co silau*).

Classis Syriaca and Cohors II *Classica sagittariorum*

The evidence for a Roman fleet in Syria is only intermittent, and this is probably a fair indication of its career. The main Roman fleet in the eastern Mediterranean was always based at Alexandria in Egypt, with a subordinate one in the Black Sea. Given the winds and currents in the region Alexandria is a base from which most of the Syrian and southern Anatolian waters can be dominated – the Ptolemaic kings had done so, with Cyprus as their secondary base, for two centuries[304] – and the fleet in Syria could well be dispensed with when there was no obvious threat to be countered. Even if it technically existed it was probably always relatively small.

Augustus, faced with a possible Parthian War soon after establishing himself in sole power, and himself present in the east on several occasions (as was his

co-ruler M. Vipsanius Agrippa) certainly had a fleet in Syrian waters, if only for transporting him and his suite. The obvious base, and the one which was always used when the fleet existed, was Seleukeia-in-Pieria, though its artificial harbour was liable to silting.[305] The recruitment of the *cohors* II *Classica* out of marines and sailors in Augustus' time implies both the existence of, and then the reduction or even the disbandment of, the Syrian fleet, probably after the end of the Parthian threat once peace had been made in 20 BC. It appears to have taken a role in the deposition of the governor Cn. Calpurnius Piso in AD 19,[306] so was either revived by then, or had continued in existence through from Augustus' time – probably the latter, since the reign was hardly peaceful enough in 20 BC for the complete abolition of a useful military force. Later, during Vespasian's Palestine campaign, there were no Roman naval vessels available to counter Jewish 'piracy' out of Jaffa – though it may be that the Syrian and Egyptian governors were unable or unwilling to help. The problem was resolved by the capture of Jaffa by land forces.[307]

Construction work at Seleukeia-in-Pieria during Vespasian's reign (after the Jewish War), and in Trajan's reign, implies the existence of a fleet to be accommodated there,[308] and there are inscriptions from the Aegean which refer to the fleet or its personnel, whose presence was perhaps as much diplomatic as naval.[309] Piracy was always liable to reappear even after it was apparently suppressed, indeed it probably never disappeared, given the poverty and seaward access of much of the population, the geographical intricacy of the Cilician coastlands and the Aegean coasts and islands, and the potential rewards of theft at sea. The Roman fleets clearly had the intermittent task of dealing with it. It seems likely that the two rose and fell together, or rather that the size and activity of the local Syrian fleet was increased some time after the revival of piracy, and in direct response to it, and then fell back with its apparent (but only temporary) suppression.

The several cities of the Syrian coast in all likelihood maintained some warships of their own during this time. They had done so in Seleukid times and before the spread of Roman control, and they regularly depicted warships on their city-coinages under the empire – unless this was pure nostalgia for their past glories. These ships could have been used also by Roman officials at need, as could the *classis Syriaca* ships (though Vespasian had no access to such vessels in 66–70). Indeed one of the reasons to assume that there was a Syrian fleet, even if it had only a few ships at times, is that naval vessels were the best and usually the speediest way to convey news to Italy from Syria in emergencies.

The advantage of ships, of course, is precisely this: that they can often be moved much more quickly than any land forces – given the favour of the winds and currents. This meant that a permanent fleet in any one place was not always necessary, since ships from elsewhere could reach Syria in a few days. The sensitivity of the Syrian and Armenian frontiers would obviously require the existence of a rapid means of communication with Italy and naval ships would be best suited to this task. The inscriptions found at Seleukeia-in-Pieria giving details of the burials of sailors show that ships of both the Misene and Ravenna

fleets from Italy operated in Syria from time to time (and that sailors from these fleets died there).[310] In addition, there are epitaphs in Italy of Syrians who had served in those Italian fleets: three from Misenum, seven from Ravenna, and one from Brundisium.[311] These men, interestingly, generally identify themselves merely as Syrian, not as coming from any particular city – one, a trierarch, was from Tripolis, but he was so identified by his widow.

Syria had a long line of active, populous, and wealthy cities along its coast, from Seleukeia-in-Pieria and Laodikeia-ad-Mare to the great Phoenician cities to Ptolemais-Ake and Caesarea in Palestine, and Jaffa and Ascalon and Gaza, and there were others. Only two of these seaports produced regiments of the army, Tyre and Ascalon (unless *co silau* refers to Seleukeia), and both of those had good reasons to do so – for Tyre controlled part of Ituraea, producer of archers, and Ascalon had been threatened by Jewish rebels; the Berytus *colonia*, populated by Roman soldier veterans and citizens from the start, produced a sizeable militia force, but no regular regiments were named for it; its soldiers may well have been thought more useful at home, or have joined the legions. Individual soldiers, however, did come from these cities and from the other coastal cities, and they joined a variety of legions and *auxilia*. It very much looks as though those coastal port-cities were deliberately ignored by the recruiting sergeants looking to form new regiments. Why it was so is a matter for speculation (as indeed is the assumption), but one might suggest that their maritime proclivities meant that they were being preserved as a source of naval recruitment, or perhaps there was an understanding between recruiters for the navy and the army. At the same time, since as manufacturing and trading cities they produced a rich tax harvest, removing their active male workers could be a bad move for any government.

The name of the *cohors* II *Classica sagittariorium* indicates that it was recruited as an infantry cohort from among the sailors and marines of one of the Roman fleets. The only reason for assuming it was the Syrian fleet is that one of the cohort prefects was a Syrian, or at least lived at Berytus,[312] and that the unit served in Syria, according to the diplomas in which it is mentioned, in 88, 91, 129, and 156/157.[313]

The earlier prefect, Q. Aemilius Secundus, had an interesting career, from the Syrian point of view. He was probably originally from Venetia in northern Italy, but settled at the *colonia* of Berytus, either as one of the first colonists in about 29 BC or as one of the reinforcements sent in 15 BC. *Cohors* II *Classica* was the second unit he commanded; he then conducted the census ordered by the governor Quirinius at Apamaea (which is noted in the Bible in connection with the life of Jesus Christ).[314] This provides a precise date to hang his career on, for that census took place in AD 6–7. He then conducted a punitive campaign against some obstreperous Ituraeans, still during the Quirinius' governorship (they possibly objected to submitting to the census, which might lead to more rigorous tax collecting, or to the conscription of more young men into the army). He also held a sequence of several posts in the local government of Berytus as *quaestor*, *aedile* (twice), *duumvir* (twice), and *pontifex*.[315]

For II *Classica* this demonstrates that the cohort existed in the time of Augustus, and was formed from sailors and marines some years before AD 6, by which time Secundus had left and was conducting the census. Its numbering shows that it was also the second such cohort. The first had been recruited from the fleets which were stationed in the western Mediterranean (*cohors* I *Aelia Classica*),[316] hence the assumption, backed up by its station, that II *Classica*'s men came from the Syrian fleet. However, it must be said that the Syrian fleet was scarcely important enough to merit any mention most of the time: this may be the result of an intermittent existence.[317] But in Augustus' reign a fleet in Syrian waters would have been useful, given the disturbed nature of the region, including the prospect of a Parthian War, at least until peace was made with Parthia in 20 BC. Maybe the reduction in the threat after 20 permitted Augustus to disband or reduce the fleet, while aiming to continue to use the military skills of its people for the more obviously useful – in the circumstances – infantry cohort. The other formerly maritime infantry cohort (I *Classica*) has been identified as being recruited from the fleet after a campaign in 28 BC; Augustus was certainly reducing the number of his armed forces in these years, and the navy in particular was both expensive and less useful to him after the civil wars than the land units.

IV. Reinforcements and other Syrian soldiers outside Syria

An attempt was made in each the regiments recruited in Syria to discover to what extent they continued to be supplied with soldiers from Syria once they had been removed to other provinces. The attempt, it must be said, has hardly been successful, though occasional items do imply that such reinforcements did occur. By widening the question to consider any continual contact in some way with Syria, it has been possible to note a few other items, such as the reverence for *Dea Syra* in *cohors* I *Hamiorum* on Hadrian's Wall a century after the regiment moved to Britannia, or the devotion to Syrian gods at Intercisa in Pannonia.

There is also another element to be considered. Several non-Syrian regiments stayed only relatively briefly in Syria before moving elsewhere, and there are records of a number of men who had been recruited while the unit was in Syria. For example, extra forces came to Syria for the Parthian Wars (in the 60s, 114–117, the 160s, the 190s, and under Caracalla), for the suppression of the Jewish rebellions of 66–73 and 132–135, and for the conquest of the Nabataean kingdom in 106, but they were then usually moved away once the fighting was ended. The evidence of recruitment by such units in Syria is small, but telling. In Egypt in 142 a man from Philadelphia, which may well be the city of Amman, was named in a will; he was a soldier in *ala* I *Thracum Mauretana* which had moved from Egypt to Judaea between 83 and 86, and may have fought in the Jewish rebellion in the 130s; it was back in Egypt by 160;[318] at some point, it must have been in Mauretania, judging from its name, but when that was is unknown. At Intercisa in Pannonia, the home of *cohors* I *Hemesenorum*, a man from Carrhae in Mesopotamia who had served in *ala Gallorum et Pannonicorum*

Catafractaria (a third-century regiment) was buried;[319] from that same regiment another man was buried at Roedelheim;[320] the *ala* had served in the east, including Arabia, and had had a prefect who probably came from Bostra, and another who died at Palmyra.[321] Proculus, son of Rubilius, from Philadelphia, served as an *optio* in the *cohors* II *Italica c.R.* and died in Carnuntum on the Danube; he was buried there by his brother Faustinus, a centurion.[322] It has been supposed that Proculus (and perhaps Faustinus) were recruited at the time Corbulo's War, in or about 63; how they ended up at Carnuntum is unclear; their regiment is recorded in Syria in 88, 91, and 156/157. In Lycia a soldier of *cohors* I *Musulanorum*, but who actually came from Cyrrhus in Syria, was discharged in 138; he had been recruited in 113, no doubt as part of the gearing up for Trajan's Parthian War.[323] Three Thracian regiments which served in Syria acquired the extra name of *Syriaca*, but this was probably a bureaucratic ploy to distinguish them from other regiments of the same number and name, though there must have been some valid reason to impose a Syrian name on them. All these regiments had had prefects from various eastern cities (Palmyra, Berytus, and Tyre), but such appointments were only for three years normally, and such men moved on quickly.[324] The only real influence of Syria on these units was a new name.

This, it must be said, is not much, but it is perhaps sufficient to indicate that recruiting into these auxiliary regiments went on continuously, which is to be assumed anyway, and that Syrian soldiers were carried off to other provinces by non-Syrian regiments in the same way as those regiments which were fully recruited in Syria.

There are a number of soldiers and sailors whose Syrian origin is noted, usually on their epitaphs, but who do not show any obvious connection with Syrian regiments. Rome clearly attracted many of these men, either as a place to retire to, or because they served in one or other of the military units in the city; six Syrians are recorded as *equites singulares*,[325] two with the praetorians,[326] one in an Urban Cohort, the police force of the city of Rome;[327] three served in the fleet.[328] They all lived and died in Rome. Most of them simply called themselves – or were called – Syrian, but those whose precise origins were recorded came mainly from the coastal cities of Syria – Laodiceia, Berytus, Ascalon, Caesarea – with one Antiochene and one Arab.[329]

In other parts of Italy, Syrian soldiers or ex-soldiers lived (or rather died) at several places spread from Ferrara and Aquileia[330] in the north to Brundisium in the south (this one was mentioned earlier), but only at the naval bases of Ravenna and Misenum were there more than single instances.[331] Ignoring those at the naval bases, which have been noted already, the men came from several Syrian places – Antioch, Apamaea, Capitolias – and two called themselves simply Syrian. This is hardly a large number, and their Syrian origin will have had minimal impact on their adopted home cities.

Outside Italy Syrian soldiers were spread even more thinly. Some have been mentioned in earlier parts of this chapter, such as the *primus pilus* from Berytus at Nemausus in Gaul,[332] the soldiers who died at Bingium,[333] and three who were buried at Mainz.[334] Also in Germania a centurion of the legion I *Minervia*

buried his Sidonian wife at Cologne;[335] at Asciburgium there were buried a Tyrian and an Antiochene;[336] at Cannstadt Aurelius Abdetathus buried his brother, a soldier in the *ala firma catafractaria* (another third-century regiment).[337] Pannonia, of course, contained the Syrian colony at Intercisa, and in Dalmatia there were the graves of several Syrians at Salonae and Burnum, all of which have been noted already. Further inland, C. Cornelius Magnus from Berytus settled at Scupi (Skopje), having served for two decades in the legion VII *Claudia*. He then became an elected official at his adopted city, dying at the age of seventy-five.[338] Scupi was legion VII's country, whence it recruited considerable numbers of men, and where Magnus in his retirement would have plenty of fellow veterans around him. In Moesia in 207 at the Castra Nova near modern Pleven (Bulgaria), M. Valerius Apolli[naris] was discharged from the *equites singularis*. He was from Antioch in Syria, and since the diploma was found in Moesia, he presumably retired there.[339]

This was the normal pattern, of course, that veterans settled with their fellows, often close to their legionary or *auxilia* base. So in Dacia there were Syrians at Tibiscum and in Africa at el-Kantara. No doubt, though we cannot (yet) prove it, there were Syrians settled in the (unexcavated) *vicus* outside the fort of I *Hamiorum* at Carvoran on Hadrian's Wall. Intercisa on the Danube was effectively a Syrian town, as was Commagena in Raetia. These concentrations will be considered in a later chapter; here I am concerned to locate the individual Syrian soldiers who were spread over the empire on their military service. It will have been noticed that there were concentrations at such places as el-Kantara and Intercisa, but that Italy was a major magnet, and that inside Italy the great majority of Syrians went to Rome or are attested at the two fleet bases at Misenum and Ravenna. The Balkan lands, with their heavy military presence, held a fair number as well, but in Asia Minor and Greece, being effectively ungarrisoned by major military units, there were no military Syrians and so few Syrian soldiers retired there.

The west was similarly, apart from the German frontier, largely devoid of Syrians of the military sort. There were none in Spain, though some men from the Tingitana garrison retired there – Tingitana was usually linked for government purposes with the Spanish provinces. There is only one Syrian soldier attested in Gaul, at Nemausus, and just one is recorded from Britain. This was another dischargee who must have had an interesting career. His name is missing from the diploma, but he was the son of a man called Cassius, and he was from Heliopolis (Baalbek). That is, his father was not a Roman citizen, though Heliopolis was part of Berytus' territory. He was discharged from the *cohors* I *Aelia Classica*,[340] which was a unit raised from sailors of one of the fleets by Hadrian. It had been in Arabia in 142, and this was no doubt where the son of Cassius was recruited. (The curious nature of military dispositions is thus illustrated: an infantry unit of former sailors was posted to a desert province.) By the time he was discharged the regiment had moved to Britannia, having been there since at least 145/146. No doubt this change had been something of a shock to a man from Syria who had joined the regiment in Arabia, but if he joined the Roman navy to see the empire, the son of Cassius had surely succeeded. The diploma was

found, furthermore, at Ravenglass in Cumberland, one of the northwesternmost forts of the western continuation of Hadrian's Wall. This might be taken as an epitome of the Roman Empire: a man from Syria could be recruited, perhaps as a sailor, into a military unit of former sailors in Arabia, serve as a horse-soldier (he is called *eques*), and be discharged at the very northwestern point of that empire.

V. The third-century army and after

The records of individual military units are scarce and more scattered after the ending of the practice of issuing discharge diplomas about AD 200. This was followed by the substantial military changes which took place during the military and political crises of the third century. It is very difficult to link the units known to have existed in, say, AD 200, to those which are known to exist a century later. This difficulty is compounded by the fading away of the practice of recording details epigraphically.

There have been occasional references in this study to the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This is a record of official posts and it includes what purports to be a complete record of the individual military units and their stations in existence at the time it was compiled. How complete or accurate it is has long been an issue – it was, after all, a bureaucratic document produced in a study without obvious reference to the situation on the ground – but it does give a generally acceptable picture of the Roman Empire's military situation at about the time of its composition, c.400. Two aspects are here relevant: the evidence which the document provides of the survival of some of the units from the early empire and the names of the new units of the new army.

The increased emphasis on cavalry in the new army meant that the survival rate of *alae* was slightly higher than that of the *cohortes*. Of the latter listed in the *Notitia* only four the Syrian regiments seem to have survived. Two of these were in Egypt, the *cohors* II *Ituraeorum* and the *cohors* I *Apamenorum*, both on the southern frontier, a region where cavalry was hardly needed. The *cohors* III *milliaria Petraeorum* was part of the command of the *dux Armeniae* in Cappadocia, which is where it had been since its service in Arrian's Alan campaign in the 130s. The *cohors* I *Ituraeorum* was still listed under the commander in Mauretania Tingitana, even if that province had been reduced to little more than the city of Tingis itself. This is not a high survival rate for the very large number of *cohortes* which had been recruited from Syria between the times of Augustus and Septimius.

The Syrian *alae* which had been retained in the east showed a greater ability to continue in existence than those which had been posted elsewhere. The *ala* I *Ulpia dromadariorum* had probably become the *ala* I *Valeria dromadariorum*, Trajan's name being replaced by that of Diocletian or Constantine. The regiment was in Egypt, according to the *Notitia*, having been in Syria in the second century. The *cohors* I *Damascenorum* had apparently become a cavalry unit (*ala* I *Damascena*) and was part of the command of the *dux Foenica*, of which Damascus was a part; some doubt must obviously exist about the continuity between these two units.

An *ala* I *Parthorum* was part of the *dux Osrhoene*'s command in the *Notitia*; it may be a descendant of the *ala Parthorum veterana* of the first century. The elimination of the Parthian state in the 220s might have sent refugees into the Roman Empire so that either the old regiment was revived or a new one formed. The *ala Gallorum et Thracum*, which had been in Syria in 56 and after, seems to have been become the *ala Thracum dromadariorum* in the command of the *dux Palestinae*. Also in that command was the *ala* I *milliaria Sebastena*, no doubt a continuation of the *ala* from that city which had existed much earlier.

The search for continuity between the units of the early and late imperial armies is clearly a desperate one. A few evidently retained their old names, no doubt as part of their unit pride, but it is unlikely that continuity of station or of personnel was maintained. It is noticeable that the army of the later empire was clearly recruited on very different principles than its earlier version. The failure to maintain any connection with local communities is the most obvious change. Only two of the Syrian units whose names indicate some sort of continuity were stationed anywhere near their original homes, those of Damascus and Sebaste.

The break was complete.

Notes

1 One reason for the violence of the Jewish revolts may be that, since Jews did not join the Roman army, there were plenty of young men in Judaea to join the rebellions.
2 E. A. Myers, *The Ituraeans and the Roman Near East, Reassessing the Sources*, Cambridge 2010, 165–167; he died unexpectedly in Antioch in 20 BC, after having been dethroned some time earlier for associating too closely with bandits (Josephus, *AJ* 15.343–344; *BJ* 1.398).
3 *I. Philae* 159.
4 *CIL* III, 14147/1 (for the *cohors* II *Ituraeorum*); *SB* V, 7959 (for *cohors Facundi*); there were several other cohorts bearing the names of their commanders in Egypt at the time – see R. Alston, *Soldiers and Society in Roman Egypt, a Social History*, London 1995, 185–186.
5 I have discussed this episode in *Roman Conquests, Judaea and Egypt*, Barnsley 2012.
6 *CIL* III, 14147, 1.
7 *AE* 1991, 1890.
8 Josephus, *BJ* 2.500: Antiochos of Commagene supplied 2000 cavalry and 3000 archers, Agrippa almost the same, Soaemus of Emesa 4000 troops, a total of up to 14,000 soldiers, equivalent to three legions.
9 *CIL* XVI, 29; *AE* 2008, 88.
10 *AE* 2010, 1747 = *I. Syringes* 697.
11 *Not. Dig.*, Or 28.45.
12 The Egyptian references to both units are conveniently listed by Alston, *Soldiers and Society*, 179–180, and by Myers, *Ituraeans*, 183–184.
13 Holder, *Auxilia* 14; Myers, *Ituraeans*, 180.
14 *CIL* XIII, 7040–7042, 6278 (= Holder, *Auxilia*, nos. 1681–1684).
15 *CIL* XVI, 61.
16 *CIL* III, 4367, 4368, 4371, 11083; *Intercisa* 2 (= Holder, *Auxilia* nos. 571–575).
17 *CIL* XVI, 57, 163, 175; *RMD* 4.226; *ZPE* 174, 2010, and 176, 2011.
18 *CIL* XVI, 36; *ZPE* 165, 2008, 168, 2008, 176, 2011, and 185, 2012; Arrian, *Ektaxis* 1, 19.
19 *CIL* XVI, 26, 42 (= Holder, *Auxilia* no. 1671); 347; *RMD* 3, 168; *CIL* 1657; *RMD* 4, 226; *RMD* 5, 384; *CIL* 1690, 107, 108; *AE* 2009, 1079, 1722, and 1826, and 2011, 1790; *ZPE* 171, 2009 and 176, 2011.

20 *CIL* XVI, 161, 165, 169, 170, 181, 182; *RMD* 2.5; *AE* 2000, 1727 and 2009, 1834; *ZPE* 146, 2004; M. M. Roxan, 'The Auxilia of Mauretania Tingitana', *Latomus* 32, 1973, 835–855.
21 *ZPE* 188, 2014 and 192, 2015.
22 Holder, *Auxilia*, 1681 (= *CIL* XIII 7040).
23 Holder, *Auxilia*, 1682, 1683 (= *CIL* XIII, 7041, 7042).
24 Holder, *Auxilia*, 571–573, 575, 576 (= *CIL* III, 4367, 4371, 4318; *Intercisa* 2; *CIL* XVI, 57).
25 *P. Oxy* VII, 1022.
26 *RMD* 1.9 (identifying 'Hippo' as Hippos in Africa in the index); see also H.-G. Pflaum, 'Un nouveau diplome militaire d'un soldat de l'armee d'Egypte', *Syria* 44, 1967, 339–362.
27 *CIL* XVI, 42.
28 Cheesman, *Auxilia* 182; Alston, *Soldier and Society*, 180, 185.
29 Holder, *Auxilia*, 6–9.
30 On these annexations, and the kings' reactions, see R. D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Commagene', *ANRW* II 8, 1977, 783–785, 791–794.
31 M.-F. Baslez, 'La famille de Philopappus de Commagene, un Prince entre deux mondes', *DHA* 18, 1992, 89–101, and Sullivan (previous note).
32 Josephos, *BJ* 2.500; Commagene supplied 2000 soldiers; others would have been retained in the kingdom in view of the possibility of either revolt in sympathy with the Jews, or a Parthian attack.
33 Cheesman, *Auxilia* 181.
34 *ChLA* X1, no. 501; only the first two letters of 'Commagenorum' are legible, barely, but no other *ala* in Egypt begins with 'co'.
35 *CIL* XVI, 29.
36 *SBI* 4567, 4575; L. J. Lesquier, *L'armee Romaine de l'Egypte de Auguste a Diocletian*, Cairo 1918, app. I, no. 43.
37 They disagreed over the Roman annexation: Sullivan, 'Dynasty of Commagene', 783–785.
38 *CIL* XVI, 52; *RMD* 2, 93 and *CIL* III, 5224; *O Tait* II, 1689; Alston, *Soldiers and Society*, 166–167; on *AE* 2008, 1187, a decurion of the regiment, A. Aelius Benivolus, is recorded on a bronze plaque from Svistov in Moesia Inferior, but, as it is a dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus in Hadrian's reign it is somewhat suspect, and is quite possibly a modern forgery.
39 *AE* 2005, 1715 (= *RMD* 5, 368); *AE* 2011, 1791; *CIL* VIII, 18248 + *AE* 1987, 1060; *ZPE* 152, 2005 and 177, 2011.
40 *RMD* 3, 148.
41 *AE* 2003, 1319 (of 104).
42 *RMD* 2.93 and *CIL* XVI, 174; *AE* 2009, 994.
43 *O Tait* II, 1689.
44 Alston, *Soldiers and Society*, 167.
45 V. Maxfield, 'The Deployment of the Roman Auxilia in Upper Egypt and the Eastern Desert during the Principate', in G. Alfoldy (ed.), *Kaiser, Heer und Gesellschaft in der Romische Kaiserzeit*, Stuttgart 2000, 407–442.
46 *AE* 2003, 1319.
47 Noted by P. Parker, *The Empire Stops Here: A Journey along the Frontier of the Roman World*, London 2009, 159, 165.
48 The survival of these names implies that the local population was not seriously disturbed even if the army units disappeared.
49 *AE* 2005, 1706, 1704, 1707, 1332; *RMD* 4, 222; *CIL* XVI, 50; *AE* 2009, 1035, 1701; *ZPE* 148, 2004, and 192, 2014.
50 *RMD* 1.39 (of 140); *RMD* 2.123 (of 179); *AE* 2007, 1761, 1762, 2009, 1701 and 2011, 1791; *ZPE* 153, 2006, 176, 2011 and 148, 2004.

51 *AE* 1998, 1112.
52 *AE* 2000, 125.
53 *RMD* 1.6, 6.9 (of 96), *CIL* XVI, 46 (of 100), *CIL* XVI, 54 (of 104/105); *AE* 2008, 1733, 1735, and 2009, 1818, 1822; *ZPE* 192, 2014.
54 *AE* 2008, 1836.
55 Altars: *CCID* 159, 166; *AE* 1983, 846 (dated 139); tiles: *AE* 1983, 848; diplomas: *ZPE* 181, 2012 and 191, 2014 (of 142 and 146).
56 *CIL* XVI, 107.
57 *AE* 1987, 843.
58 *SEG* XXXI, 1513 (= *CIL* XVI, 541), dated only vaguely to 'c. 50–200 AD').
59 *AE* 1938, 6.
60 *AE* 2011, 1803; *ZPE* 152, 2005, and 177, 2011; M. P. Speidel, *Emperor Hadrian's Speeches to the African Army: A New Text*, Mainz 2006; the Commagenean text is on 62–65 with a discussion.
61 *AE* 2011, 1803; *ZPE* 152, 2005 and 177, 2011; *RMD* 5, 373.
62 J. Baradez, *Fossatum Africae*, Paris 1949.
63 *CIL* VIII, 2488, 18248; *AE* 1987, 1060; Fentress, *Numidia*, 89, 90.
64 *CIL* VIII, 4292, *ILS* 2761, M. G. Jarrett, 'An Album of the Equestrians from North Africa in the Emperor's Service', *Epigraphica Studia* 9, 1972, 146–232; Y. Le Bohec, *Le Troisiene Legion Auguste*, Paris 1989, 138.
65 *AE* 1994, 1764; P.-L. Gatier, 'Une Inscription latine du moyen Euphrate', *Syria* 51, 1994, 151–157.
66 Josephos, *BJ* 2.409–509 and 3.64–69.
67 *RIU* 1075, 1124, 1125, 1126.
68 J. Fitz, *Les Syriens a Intercisa*, Coll. Latomus, 1972.
69 Ibid., 415–511.
70 Spaul, *Cohort* 413.
71 *RIU* 1155 (= *AE* 1965, 223).
72 It was sent to the east in 161 and returned in 167; A. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*, London 1966, 178, claims that the fortress at Aquincum was empty while II *Adiutrix* was away, but A. Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London 1974, 184, points out that finds at the site indicate the temporary occupation by IV *Flavia* during *Adiutrix*'s absence.
73 *RIU* 1189.
74 *RIU* 1075.
75 *RIU* 1184.
76 *RIU* 1176.
77 *AE* 1910, 163, *CIL* III, 10306, and *AE* 1971, 334 (Caracalla); *CIL* III, 10636, and *AE* 1975, 701 (Maximinus); *CIL* III, 3331 (Gordian).
78 To Elagabalus: *AE* 1907, 4376 and *AE* 1910, 141.
79 Diana Tifitana, *AAASH* 1968, 315, and Diana Augusta, *CIL* III, 10304.
80 *CIL* 310303, 10306, 10307; *RIU* 1068.
81 The latest is a dedication to the Emperor Trebonianus Gallus, dated 252.
82 Spaul, *Cohort* 411–413 for a partial list.
83 *CIL* 16, 131; *RIU* 1187 (= *AE* 1910, 146).
84 *RIU* 184 (= *CIL* III, 10316); *RIU* 1202 (= *CIL* III, 10318); *RIU* 1194 (= *AE* 1909, 150); *RIU* 1203 (= *Intercisa* I, 129).
85 *RIU* 1182 (= *AE* 1910, 137), 1186 (= *AE* 1901, 15), *CIL* 310307; *RIU* 1068.
86 *RIU* 1180 (= *Intercisa* I, 1134); this could be another indication of the formation of the regiment some time before 180.
87 Fitz, *Syriens*, table on p. 172.
88 *CIL* 13, 595.
89 *AE* 1952, 293.
90 Spaul, *Cohort*, 415.

91 *AE* 1926, 145.
92 Fentress, *Numidia*, 133.
93 *AE* 1933, 47 (Iulius Draco, between 198 and 311); *CIL* VIII, 3002 (M. Vibius Optatus); *CIL* VIII, 2496 and *AE* 1933, 46 (C. Iulius Aeturio in 211–217).
94 *P. Mich* VII, 454; Aston, *Soldiers and Society*, 188.
95 G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge, MA 1983, 79–84; the province may not have been fully organised until 111.
96 *P. Mich* 466, of March 107, a letter by a legionary to his father in Egypt.
97 *CIL* XI, 5669, C. Canusius Clemens was tribune of II *Petraeorum*; *ILS* 9471, L. Abournius was in III *Ulpia Petraeorum*; their dates of service are not known with any precision; Alston, *Soldiers and Society*, does not include these units in his catalogue.
98 Arrian, *Ektaxis*.
99 *CIL* XI, 5669; he went on to be *epistrategos* of the Arsinoite nome; dating is difficult, but Clemens apparently began his career under Trajan.
100 *RMD* 5 (= *AE* 2005, 1736), *AE* 2006, 1841 and 2008, 1238; *ZPE* 183, 2012 (for both cohorts; *ZPE* 188, 2014 and 193, 2015 (for *cohors* I); *CIL* III, 600 and XVI, 106.
101 *RMD* 3; *CIL* XVI, 87; *RMD* 5; *AE* 2006, 1835; *AE* 2004, 1730 and 2011, 1810; *ZPE* 153, 2005.
102 *RMD* 1.60.
103 S. Applebaum, *Prolegomena to the Study of the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132–135)*, BAR S 7, Oxford 1976, 66.
104 My father, having spent two years in the trenches in France, was always thereafter irked that the British Army units who occupied parts of Germany in 1918–1919 were given new uniforms in order to impress the occupied; fighters want the reward of gloating after victory.
105 *BRGK* 40, 1959, 169 and 58, 1977, 99.
106 D. L. Kennedy, 'Parthian Regiments in the Roman Army', *11th Limes Congress* 1977, 521–531.
107 Ibid., 523.
108 *AE* 1984, 796.
109 *CIL* XIII, 35, 10024/35; Kennedy, 'Parthian Regiments', 522; H. Schoenberger, 'The Roman Frontier in Germany: An Archaeological Survey', *JRS* 59, 1969, 144–197; the legionary fortress can only date from c.30 when XX *Valeria Victrix* was moved there from Cologne.
110 *CIL* CVI, 32933, XVI, 56, XIII, 21064.
111 *AE* 2007, 1774, 1775.
112 *CIL* VIII, 9371, 9838, 21619, 21629, 21720, 21779; *AE* 1954, 135, 9827, 9828; *ILS* 1355, 2493, 2607, 2733; *ZPE* 177, 2011 = *AE* 2011, 1808 (thirteen texts in all).
113 *AE* 1956, 62; *AE* 1987, 1127; Roxan, 'Mauretania Tingitana'.
114 *AE* 1908, 200 (= *ILS* 9013); Kennedy, 'Parthian Regiments', 524–525.
115 Josephus, *BJ* 2.500, in describing the preparations by Cestius Gallus in 66, lists the contributions of the client kings, and then adds that 'further auxiliaries in very large numbers were collected from the towns', which is more than a little vague.
116 *RMD* 1.2; *CIL* XV, 39 (= *RMD* 5.335); *CIL* XVI, 39, 46; *AE* 2008, 1733, 1735 (= *AE* 2009, 1818); *ZPE* 192, 2014, 215–237.
117 Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, 82.
118 *AE* 1959, 304.
119 *ILS* 9506 (= *AE* 1992, 662).
120 *ZPE* 194, 2015, 223–227.
121 *AE* 2005, 1710; *ZPE* 192, 2014, 215–237.
122 *RMD* 5.418, 419 and *ZPE* 170, 2009, 212–220; *CIL* XVI, 111; *RMD* 1.55 of 157, 159/160 and 161 respectively; *AE* 2008, 1738–1740, 1744–1747.
123 *RMD* 1.2.

124 Strabo 16.2.10.
125 Dio Cassius 47.27.1–3.
126 *CIL* III, 6687; J. Balty and J.-C. Balty, 1977, 'Apamee de Syrie, archeologie et histoire I, Des origines a la Tetrarchie', *ANRW* II 8, 103–134.
127 M. Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome*, Cambridge, MA 2005, 182.
128 J. D. Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, Oxford 1990, 19–21; for a modern version of the same process see N. N. Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800–1980*, Cambridge 1987.
129 *ZPE* 192, 2015, 238–246.
130 *C. Pap. Lat.* 119 and 310.
131 *BGU* III, 729.
132 *P. Brooklyn* 24.
133 They are listed in Alston, *Soldiers and Society*, 174.
134 *CIL* III, 600.
135 *Not. Dig.*, Or 35.60.
136 *C. Pap. Lat.* 310; see for Qasr el-Banat, S. E. Sidebotham, *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route*, California 2011, 132, 243, 164.
137 Josephos *BJ* 3.9–21.
138 *CIL* XVI, 35.
139 *ZPE* 165, 2008; *AE* 2005, 1336 and *ZPE* 183, 2012; *AE* 2006, 1841, *ZPE* 188, 2014 and 193, 2015; *CIL* XVI, 106; *CIL* III, 600.
140 *AE* 1994, 1764.
141 Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 91–92; there were in fact two places with similar names close to each other: Canatha and Kanata; the former appears to have always been the more important of the two, and the name of the Roman regiment is always spelt with an 'h'.
142 Josephos, *AJ* 17.23–27.
143 Josephos, *AJ* 18.106–107.
144 Josephos, *BJ* 3.477–584.
145 *AE* 2011, 1791; *RMD* 3.155 (= *AE* 1995, 1185).
146 *CCID* 485; F. Vollmer, *Inscriptiones Bavariae Romanae*, Munich 1915, no. 427l; *AE* 2004, 1152.
147 J. von Elbe, *Roman Germany*, 2nd ed., Mainz 1977, 377; Schoenberger, 'Roman Frontier', 157, 170; H. Wolff, *Jahrberichts des Historisches Vereins* 97, 1955, 21–33, for the fort.
148 *RMD* 2.68.
149 Herodian 6.7.2–4; Schoenberger, 'Roman Frontier', 176–177.
150 von Elbe, *Roman Germany*, 377–379.
151 I take these regiments to have been named for this Chalcis and not for the city of the same name in the Bekaa Valley; the latter was smaller and overshadowed by the Phoenician cities and the Syrian country, and its men were more likely to be recruited into Ituraean regiments.
152 R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis*, Paris 1945; this in its full detail would perhaps not be accepted today, but the phrase is ancient and clearly applies to a defensive system; earlier Poidebard had published *Le Trace de Rome dans le desert de Syrie*, Paris 1934.
153 *AE* 2009, 1800 and 2008, 1713 (of 75); *AE* 2011, 1118 (of 78).
154 *CIL* VI, 3538 (= *ILS* 2719).
155 *AE* 2005, 1706, and 2008, 1195; *ZPE* 148, 2004, 259–270; 153, 2005, 187–206; and 165, 2008, 232–236.
156 *RMD* 1.49 and *AE* 2007, 1236; *AE* 2008, 1722–1723, 1725–1726, 2009, 1815; one diploma (*AE* 2007, 1233) appears to put the regiment in Moesia Superior in 145.
157 *AE* 2002, 1241.
158 Speidel, *Emperor Hadrian's Speeches*, 68: the reading is, as Speidel says, 'uncertain'; Holder, *Auxilia*, does not list it, but Staberius' record is definitive.
159 *RMD* 5.368, 373; *ZPE*, 152, 2005, 229–262, and 177, 2011, 263–271.

160 *AE* 1950, 58 (a dedication to Hadrian); 59 (III *Augusta*) and 60–63 (*ala Pannoniorum*); Fentress, *Numidia*.
161 *ILAlg* 3840–3843.
162 *ZPE* 193, 2015, 234–240.
163 *AE* 2006, 1841 (of 153); *CIL* XV, 106 (of 156/157); *CIL* III, 600 (of c.163).
164 *AE* 1991, 1573.
165 Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 181.
166 Ibid.
167 *AE* 1925, 132.
168 *AE* 1961, 303.
169 *CIL* III, 8734.
170 *AE* 2009, 1015.
171 This was also the date of the revolt of Scribonianus against the Emperor Claudius, for which the VII *Claudia* was awarded the emperor's name, but then was immediately moved elsewhere.
172 *Diodora* 5, 1970, 105, no. 7.
173 *AE* 1994, 1357 and 1358.
174 *AE* 2009, 1034.
175 *CIL* XVI, 36; *RMD* 5.333.
176 *AE* 2010, 1871, *AE* 2009, 1924, and *RMD* 5.332.
177 *RMD* 5.332.
178 *CIL* XVI, 64; *RMD* 2.90; *CIL* XVI, 80.
179 *CCID* 518.
180 von Elbe, *Roman Germany*, 133–135.
181 *BRGK* 38, 1957, 106.
182 *RMD* 1.69; *AE* 2011, 1810; *ZPE* 153, 2005, 185–191.
183 *CIL* V, 5126 (of 132/133); *BGU* 73 (of 135).
184 *AE* 2005, 1730; *RMD* 3.160.
185 According to a proposed 'constitution' of the Syrian garrison for that year: *ZPE* 153, 2005, 185–191.
186 Applebaum, *Prolegomena*, 65–68.
187 *AE* 2010, 1871.
188 *RMD* 3, 160.
189 *CIL* V, 5126 (Bergomum); note 33 for Egypt.
190 Spaul, *Ala* 2, 140–141.
191 *CIL* XVI, 159 (of 88); *AE* 1985, 992 (of 162/70); *AE* 2009, 1834; *ZPE* 146, 2004 (of 103/104) and 153, 2005 (of 153).
192 *CIL* XVI, 164.
193 *CIL* XVI, 161.
194 *ILM* 10.
195 *AE* 1957, 62.
196 *ILM* 40 + *AE* 1964 45 + *AE* 1991, 1745.
197 For the army in Tingitana, cf Roxan, 'Mauretania Tingitana'.
198 *ZPE* 146, 2004; *RMD* 5.5 and *AE* 1984, 529 (= *RMD* 2.107).
199 *RMD* 5.360 = *CIL* XVI, 69 (of 122); *RMD* 5.420 (of 158).
200 A new diploma from North Yorkshire provides a full list: R.S.O. Tomlin, 'Inscriptions', *Britannia* 39, 2008, 381–384 (= *AE* 2008, 800).
201 *RIB* 1.1778.
202 *RIB* 1, 118; 13, 1814, 1816, 1818, 1820, 1822.
203 *RIB* 1, 1778.
204 A. R. Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain*, Oxford 1981, 233–234.
205 *RIB* 1, 2167.
206 *RIB* 1, 2172.

207 A. S. Robertson, *The Antonine Wall: A Handbook to the Surviving Remains*, 5th ed., rev. L. Keppie, Glasgow 2001, 88–94.
208 *RIB* 1, 1792.
209 *RIB* 1, 1791.
210 *RIB* 1, 1795 (undated, but probably third century).
211 N. Hodgson (comp.), *Hadrian's Wall, 1999–2009*, Kendall 2009, 125–127.
212 *RMD* 5.368 and 373; *ZPE* 152, 2005 and 177, 2011.
213 Speidel, *Emperor Hadrian's Speeches*, 48–52.
214 *ILAlg* I, 3765; it is not uncommon to find wives and children accompanying soldiers; a mother at a military camp is much less common: it is possible therefore that Valerianus was a local recruit, or had been born in the camp.
215 *IRT* 868, 869.
216 *AE* 1962, 304 and 305, and 1972, 683.
217 Dio Cassius 48.24.3.
218 M. Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome*, Cambridge, MA 2005, 69–70; H. Seyrig, 'L'Incorporation de Palmyre a l'empire romain', *Syria* 13, 1932, 266–277; for a criticism of the idea of the city as balancing between empires, see E. Will, 'Pline l'ancien et Palmyre: un problem d'histoire ou d'histoire internal?', *Syria* 62, 1985, 263–270.
219 *SEG* LIV, 2004, 1623.
220 P. Weiss and M. P. Speidel, 'Der erste Militardiplome fur Arabia', *ZPE* 150, 2004, 299–307; *CIL* XVI, 106.
221 In 1917–1918, Australian horses ('Walers') in Palestine had to be specially trained to campaign with the Imperial Camel Brigade; at one point General Allenby, having newly taken command, arrived at a parade of the Camel Brigade (newly raised) on a horse, approached the line of camels deliberately closer than the animals were accustomed to, and the whole camel line recoiled. He had, of course, made his point, especially with the recalcitrant Australians (G. Inchbald, *Camels and Others*, London 1968, 66–67).
222 *AE* 1947, 171; *CIL* III, 93; M. P. Speidel, 1977, 'The Roman Armuy in Arabia', *ANRW* II, 8, 704.
223 *AE* 1923, 23.
224 R. O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus*, American Philological Association Monograph 26, Cleveland 1971, published a collected edition of these records; the names of soldiers are listed by Spaul, *Cohort*, 434–435. Since this study is directed to the influence of Syrians within the Roman Empire, these results are of little use here.
225 *RMD* 1.17 and 27; on these see J. C. Mann, 'The Palmyrene Diplomas', appendix II of *RMD* 2.
226 *AE* 1927, 56 (= *AE* 2004, 1212).
227 *AE* 1977, 694.
228 Ibid.; *AE* 1983, 797; *AE* 2004, 1293.
229 P. Southern, 'The *numeri* of the Roman Imperial Army', *Britannia* 20, 1989, 81–140: the Palmyrans are on p. 137.
230 *CIL* III, 1471; the crucial 'word' is *NPO*, which may be interpreted in more than one way.
231 *CIL* 3803; tiles of the regiment are at *AE* 1797, 5019 and *AE* 1980, 755.
232 Listed by Alston, *Soldiers and Society*, 188; *Not. Dig.* 31.49.
233 Fentress, *Numidia*, nos. 10, 12, 24.
234 Southern, *Numeri*, 137.
235 Fentress, *Numidia*, no. 24; Le Bohec, *Troisieme Legion*, 425.
236 *AE* 1989, 902.
237 *AE* 1900, 197 (= *ILS* 9173).
238 *RMD* 1.3 and *CIL* XVI, 35.
239 Josephus, *AJ* 19.365 and 20.122; *BJ* 11.40.
240 Josephus, *AJ* 20.122.

241 *AE* 1954, 143; *ZPE* 165, 2008 (of 93) and 183, 2012 (of 91).
242 *CIL* XVI, 87.
243 *AE* 2011, 1810; *ZPE* 153, 2005; *RMD* 1.69.
244 J. F. Gillam, 'The *dux ripae* at Dura', *TAPA* 72, 1941, 174–175.
245 *RMD* 5.329, 330, 331; *AE* 2006, 1942; *ZPE* 165, 2008 and 183, 2012.
246 *AE* 2007, 1974 and 1775; *AE* 2011, 1808 (= *ZPE* 177, 2011); *CIL* VIII, 21000 (of 255/258 at Cherchel).
247 *AE* 1966, 596 (M. Aelius Valerianus).
248 *CIL* VIII, 21516 (Aurelius Masfelus); 21041 (Gaggia).
249 *AE* 1954, 143; *CIL* VIII, 21516.
250 P. Weiss, 'Militardiplome fur Moesia', *Chiron* 38, 2008 (= *AE* 2009, 1800).
251 *CIL* XVI, 45 and *AE* 2006, 1862; *ZPE* 180, 2012, 295–301; *AE* 2008, 1195.
252 *AE* 2006, 1863.
253 *AE* 2011, 1791; *ZPE* 176, 2022.
254 *RMD* 5.376, 442; *ZPE* 117, 244; *AE* 2007, 1761 and 1762.
255 *AE* 2009, 1803.
256 *CIL* XI, 1934; *CIL* III, 8617; *AE* 1926, 80; *AE* 2011, 365.
257 Spaul, *Cohors*, 454.
258 Holder, *Auxilia*, lists it under Syrian cohorts, p. 231, referring to *CIL* XIII, 8593; it is not included in Spaul, *Cohors*.
259 E.g, *AE* 1931, 30.
260 *CIL* XIII, 11962a; *AE* 1992, 1440; *CIL* XIII, 7512, 7514, 7513, 7515; Hodder, *Auxilia*, 323.
261 *AE* 1920, 120.
262 *CIL* VIII, 21038.
263 *ZPE* 152, 2005, 229–262; *ZPE* 177, 2011, 263–271 (= *AE* 2011, 1807).
264 *AE* 1962, 304; *AE* 1973, 573.
265 *AE* 1950, 128.
266 *RMD* 5.371, 372.
267 *CIL* III, 600; *ZPE* 146, 2004 and 159, 2007.
268 *RMD* 5.361; *AE* 2009, 1834.
269 *AE* 1929, 86; *AE* 1934, 280; *Dura* IX, 3, 971.
270 *BRGK* 58, 101.
271 *AE* 1982, 860; *CIL* XIV, 3955.
272 Spaul, *Cohors*, 487.
273 *CIL* XII, 2231.
274 *RMD* 5.360; *ZPE* 183, 2012.
275 *RMD* 3.157.
276 *CIL* XIII, 6235; it is presumably this inscription which has led Holder (*Auxilia*, 272, no. 311) to classify the regiment as '(*Gallorum*)', for the dead man was Treveran; but one man's origin is not enough to indicate the origin of a whole regiment.
277 *CIL* XVI, 106; *AE* 1933, 212; *ZPE* 193, 2015, 253–260.
278 *IGRR* IV, 1213.
279 Virtually any man in the first century of the Principate with the *cognomen* Agrippa has been suggested as the origin of the name, but most are fairly obscure and unconvincing; see Spaul, *Ala* 24–26, for examples.
280 Josephus, *BJ* 2.421–429; the troops numbered 3000, or so Josephus says.
281 Josephus, *AJ* 19.299, mentions the army's commander, and therefore the army.
282 *RMD* 5.371, 372.
283 *CIL* III, 600.
284 *AE* 1931, 113.
285 *ILS* 8852.
286 *AE* 1934, 280.

287 *CIL* III, 14217/6.
288 *CIL* XVI, 76, 178, 96, 97; *AE* 1977, 616; *CIL* III, 5647.
289 See the list in Spaul, *Cohors* 480–481.
290 *AE* 1944, 101, and *AE* 1960, 360 a.
291 *CIL* III, 12610a, b, 12604, 12605, 8074, 28, 14216, 30.
292 *AE* 1914, 120.
293 *CIL* III, 10468–10470.
294 *CIL* VIII, 20945.
295 *CIL* VIII, 9964.
296 *CIL* II 1180.
297 M. P. Speidel, 'The Road to Viminacium', *Asloski Vestnick* 335, 339–341 (= MAVORS 8, 170–172).
298 *CIL* III, 3638, 3639.
299 Listed in, Spaul, *Cohors*, 417; if Septimius is meant, this would make the 'Aureliana' reference apply to Marcus, and so put the origin of the regiment in his reign; but Septimius had retrospectively adopted himself as a son of Marcus Aurelius, so he might be the reference.
300 *AE* 1978, 695n; *CIL* III, 8074, 28.
301 *CIL* III, 3638.
302 *AE* 1968, 422.
303 M. P. Speidel, 'A Thousand Thracian Recruits for Mauretania Tingitana', *Antiquites Africaines* 11, 1978, 167–173.
304 For technical details on the issue of winds and currents consult J. H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology and War, Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649–1571*, Cambridge 1988.
305 Strabo 16.27; Pausanias 8.29.3; V. Chapot, 'Seleucie de Pierie', *Memoires de la Societe Nationale des Antiquities* 66, 1907, 149–266; the northward Syrian current carried the detritus from the Orontes towards the harbour; it is solid land now.
306 Tacitus, *Annals* 2.81.
307 Josephus, *BJ* 3.414–427.
308 D. van Berchem, 'Le Port de Seleucie de Pierie et l'infrastructure logistique des guerres Partique', *Bonner Jahrbucher* 185, 1985, 47–87.
309 *CIL* III, 434, 1447, for example.
310 H. Seyrig, 'La cimitiere des marins a Seleucie de Pierie', in *Melanges Syriens offerts a M. Rene Dussaud*, Paris 1939, 451–459.
311 *CIL* X, 414, 3546; *AE* 1974, 248 (Misenum); *CIL* IX, 26, 36, 43, 50, 56, 352 (Ravenna); *CIL* 941 (Brundisium).
312 *CIL* III, 6687.
313 *CIL* XVI, 35, 106; *ZPE* 183, 2012.
314 Luke 2.2.
315 H. Devijver, 'Equestrian Officers from the East', in P. Freeman and D. Kennedy (eds.), *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, BAR S 297, Oxford 1986, 179, 184, 188; Holder, *Auxilia* E 2.
316 Spaul, *Cohors* 477–478; the designation 'Aelia', no doubt, was an honorific bestowed by Hadrian long after the unit was originally formed.
317 C. G. Starr, *The Roman Imperial Navy, 31 BC–A.D. 324*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1960, 114–117, noted the absence, but assumes rather than demonstrates its continuity.
318 *AE* 1948, 168; the city might also be an Egyptian Philadelphia; Spaul, *Ala* 158–159; Alston, *Soldiers and Society*, 170–171.
319 *CIL* III, 10307.
320 *CIL* XIII, 7323.
321 *CIL* III, 99 (Trebius Gallus of Berytus); *IGRR* III, 10371 (Iulius Iulianius Eusebes of Palmyra).

322 *CIL* III, 13483a; M. Speidel, 'The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators', *Ancient Society* 13/14, 1982/1983, 233–240.
323 *RMD* 3.161.
324 *AE* 1928, 150 (M. Sentius Proculus of *I Thracum Syriaca*, from a prominent family at Berytus); *AE* 1985, 1569 (P. Valerius Protogenianus, prefect of both II and III *Thracum Syriaca*, at Tyre; *AE* 1911, 124 (Sex. Rarius Procelus of III *Thracum Syriaca* near Palmyra).
325 *CIL* VI, 3197 (T. Aurelius Claudianus from Syria); *CIL* VI, 3251 (Domitius Herennianus); *CIL* VI, 32795 (T. Aurelius Gemellianus, Syrian); *Epigraphica* 13, 1951, 112, no. 54 ([ ]sianus, Syrian); ib. 1126 (Marcus Alexandros, Syrian); S. Panciera, *RAC* 50, 1974, 234, no. 12 (T. Aurelius Priscus, from Caesarea); *CIL* VI, 3922 (= 33009) (M. Aurelius Maximus, *armorum custos*, Syrian).
326 *CIL* VI, 2637 (M, Antonius Ianuarius, from Laodiceia); Moretti 590 (Ianour Aswiou Syrus, from Ascalon).
327 *CIL* VI, 2910 (A. Curius Rufus, from Berytus).
328 *CIL* VI, 3114 (Iulius Apollinaris); 3138 (Valerius Maximus); 32776 (C. Anthestius Niger).
329 *CIL* VI, 3644 (C. Vettius Niger, from Antioch, veteran of legion XII *Fulminata*); 8883 (M. Ulpious Castaria, *librarius*, Arab).
330 *CIL* V, 2390 (Ferrara, Syrian); *CIL* V, sup. 181 (Aquileia, from Berytus).
331 Also from Portus (*CIL* XV, 2282); Salernum (*CIL* XIV, 532); Antium (*CIL* X, 6669); Beneventum (*CIL* IX, 2090).
332 *CIL* XII, 3072 (C. Iulius Tiberianus).
333 *CIL* XIII, 7512–7515; XIII, 11962a.
334 *BRGK* 1977, 501, nos. 72, 80; *AE* 1978, 562.
335 *RGMus* catalogue Koln, II 2086.
336 *CIL* XIII, 8593, 8843 (Sbebdas, discussed earlier, and Heliades of Antioch).
337 *BRGK* 1937, 82, no. 103.
338 *ILYug* 42; for a discussion of veteran settlements see Mann, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate*, ed. M. M. Roxan, London 1983.
339 *RMD* 5.454.
340 *RMD* 5.420.

6 The export of the gods

The spread of Syrian gods into the Roman Empire outside Syria is one of the main religious and cultural developments in Syrian relations with the empire. Syria was fertile of deities of particular power, which were eventually to be found being worshipped in most of the empire. The ultimate success story was that of Christianity – a Syrian religion – but the spread of the Jewish religion is almost as well known, though not as successful in acquiring converts, and its history is subject to considerable partisan exaggeration, as is that of Christianity. These were religions which had developed in Jerusalem, where the original god, Yahweh, was the Iron Age city-god of that place adopted by the Hebrews when they took the city sometime about 1000 BC, and developed by Christians into a universal god. This was also the origin of many of the other gods whose spread into the Roman Empire is the subject of this chapter.

An urban setting was thus the origin of the Syrian gods, such as those of Palmyra, or the god El of Emesa which the Emperor Elagabalus promoted. But the more popular gods, those which spread through the empire, came from rural areas and small towns, above all the adapted versions of the gods of Doliche and Heliopolis/Baalbek. On the female side a similar adaptation moved the goddess of Bambyke (and other parts of Syria) becoming *Dea Syra*, the Syrian goddess. For this survey I will proceed from the least important or successful of these gods to the most successful.

I. Palmyrene gods

A tiny example of the process of gods moving to new places is provided by the migration of the Palmyrene deities to Dacia. Palmyra city supported a triad of gods which may well have been a deliberate creation as the city developed in wealth and power in the first century BC.[1] They appear to have been the tribal gods of the Arabian clans who co-operated to provide a government for Palmyra, which could guarantee not just a relatively powerful civic government, but could also guarantee the safety of caravans across the desert between Palmyra and Babylonia and Palmyra and Syria. The city accepted several gods, but the most prominent was Yarhibol, the sun god, Aglibol, the moon god, Malakbel (Aglibol and Malakbel were the holy brethren), and Baalshamin, the Syrian god.

The official city-god appears to have been a compilation of all these, Bel (that is, of course, *baal*, which means simply 'lord' or 'god'), who was also a version of the Babylonian god Marduk-Bel.[2] It is to Bel that the greatest temple in the city is dedicated, though it seems probable that the individual tribes retained loyalty also to their particular tribal gods who formed part of the total.[3] These gods could thus be transported as a trio, or as Bel alone, or as individual gods, by the wide-ranging Palmyrene merchants, but it was the Palmyrene soldiers who enlisted into the Roman army, specifically in the *numerus Palmyrenorum* regiment which went to Dacia, who took their gods with them and planted them in foreign lands.

In Dacia, at Tibiscum, the veteran P. Aelius Servius, who had risen to the rank of *optio* in the *numerus Palmyrenorum*, made a dedication to the Palmyrene gods, specifically to Malachbel.[4] Servius was of Palmyrene origin, had served in the army in Dacia, and had retired as a Roman citizen to Tibiscum, where he still held to the god or gods of his home city. Another man, who was the *armorum custos* of the regiment, Aelius Zabdibol, was of the same persuasion, but he honoured the general Palmyrene god Bel,[5] the basic composite god whose main three attributes had been identified when the triad was formed. One of the other elements of the city's set of gods, Ierhebol (Yarhibol), is named on a broken marble plaque from the Dacian provincial capital of Sarmizegetusa, though the originator of the dedication is not known.[6] (A more ambiguous dedication is to the *deis patris*, the gods of the homeland, which comes from Gilau, also in Dacia; this may be a reference to Palmyra, or possibly to North Africa – but again the name of the man originating it is not known.[7]) Also at Sarmizegetusa, a temple to the 'Palmyrene gods', specified as 'Belo, Malagbel, Hierobolo' (i.e., Bel, Malakbel, Yarhibol) has been located; it includes a dedication to the Emperor Alexander Severus, that is 222–235.[8] The presence on the imperial throne of a Syrian dynasty may have encouraged the worship of this set of near-Syrian gods.

How far these deities had any effect on the non-Syrian population of Dacia we cannot tell. Tibiscum in particular had a substantial Syrian population, being the main camp of the *numerus Palmyrenorum*, and it is possible that the two dedications there, to Malachbel and to Bel, were housed in a shrine or temple to the Palmyrene gods. The connection between the arrival of these gods and the presence of the soldiers is clear, though this may not necessarily translate and spread to other, non-Syrian, inhabitants. It is to be expected that men like Servius from Palmyra, who retired in Dacia, would have married and fathered children in Dacia. The civilian community attached to the camp, the *vicus*, was thus populated by partly Palmyrene children who may have carried on their father's devotion to the foreign gods. It is, however, perhaps just as likely that they turned to the local gods of Dacia.

On the other hand, it has been theorised that the Palmyrenes in Dacia became integrated into the local Roman society, and religious evidence has been used to demonstrate it.[9] At Porolissum, the temple of Liber Pater, a quintessentially Roman deity, acquired a temple neighbouring on that of Palmyrene Bel, and

Liber Pater received a dedicatory inscription from a vexillation of Palmyrene soldiers.[10] This seems a thoroughly reasonable sequence which does not in any way invalidate what is visible at Tibiscum, where several other men mentioned their own devotion to their own home gods. But it does indicate one of the ways by which the Palmyrenes ceased to be Syrians and became Roman or Dacian – probably the former. In the Roman army the power and authority lay in being Roman. The establishment of temples implies a certain domestication of the Palmyrenes into Dacian society, but it has to be said there is precious little evidence for non-Syrians (and even the descendants of Syrians) becoming involved in the worship of the Palmyrene gods.

The transfer of part or all of the *numerus Palmyrenorum* to North Africa later in the second century led to the production of records of the Palmyrene gods there as well as in Dacia. At Calceus Herculis (el-Kantara) a centurion of legion III *Augusta* made a dedication for Malagbel in 176; unfortunately the man's name is only fragmentary: T. Cl[ ] I[ ]u[s], which is probably T. Claudius, but the cognomen is unrecoverable.[11] Another centurion of the legion, T. Flavius Mansuetus, at some time during Commodus' reign made a similar dedication.[12] At Ain el-Avenia in Tripolitania a dedication was made to Solus Hierabol in the last years of Septimius' reign, and another to *deus Ierhobolus* was made in the legionary camp at Lambaesis in 217, one of twelve inscriptions in the temple of Aesculapius there.[13] These are all connected with the III *Augusta* legion, in its main camp or with its detachments. At Castell Dimmidi (Messad), however, perhaps the most remote fort on the southern *limes*, facing the Sahara, it was the *numerus Palmyrenorum* which made a dedication to the *numen* of Malagbel, again in the reign of Alexander Severus.[14] In another dedication at the same place a dozen men are named, though none of them (like the legionary centurions) can be seen as Palmyrenes, their citizen names being of no obvious distinction as to place. Nevertheless, they are described as veterans, and so were presumably Palmyrenes, though it must be admitted that it is equally possible that they were local recruits from the Berber tribes of the area.[15]

These records do suggest that the Palmyrene gods were preserved as objects of devotion by the *numerus Palmyrenorum* in its African camp, and that, as the dedications by the centurions suggest, the desert gods of Palmyra were seen as suitable objects of general devotion by other soldiers, principally of the legion, stationed in the African desert lands, especially, perhaps, in such remote desert places as Castell Dimmidi and Ain el-Avenia.[16]

Rome, not surprisingly, was the destination of other non-military Palmyrenes, who established a sanctuary of the Palmyrene gods in the Trastavere section of the city, where there were dedications in Greek, Latin, and Aramaic. The sanctuary is dated to AD 36, so that by that time there were sufficient devotees to finance the building of such a sanctuary. The languages in use demonstrate all too clearly that these gods were the objects of devotion by natives of Palmyra; the use of Latin, however, also suggests that there were local devotees from the Roman population as well.[17]

II. Jews

The record of Jews in the Roman Empire is exceptionally well studied, though it tends to be done somewhat in isolation from the rest of the empire, almost as though the Jews were unconnected with their surroundings; moreover, some of the practitioners of the study have been far too keen to identify dubious items of evidence as Jewish in their search for as wide a spread of Jews – usually their co-religionists – as they can find throughout the empire; a certain degree of exaggeration is present in all this. It is also not always a matter of religion, but of race, though here I shall take the evidence of the presence of Jews as an indication of the presence of the Jewish religion. If they did not practice their own worship of Yahweh, after all, Jews largely ceased to be distinguishable from the rest of the Roman population. There is also the issue of the spread of the Jewish religion to non-Jews – the issues of proselytising and conversion, which is also an issue with every other expanding religion within the empire.

The evidence of the presence of Jews outside Syria is partly written, and partly epigraphic, but it also relies on the identification of the archaeological remains of synagogues. (In this, of course, so long as one substitutes the word 'temples' for 'synagogues', evidence for Jews is no different from that of other Syrians.) The written sources have been the best studied of these elements, but this has in effect meant the study of the four areas of the Roman world where the presence of Jews is acknowledged to have been relatively large, and was commented on in the ancient period. These areas have been particularly examined, while much of the rest of the empire is either ignored or dismissed without discussion, or with mere passing mentions. Apart from Palestine and to some extent Syria, the four areas with the best sources for the Jews are Egypt, Cyrenaica, Asia, and Italy, specifically Rome. It will be seen that there is evidence for other regions as well. It may also be noted that two of these areas are in fact lands where Jewish rebellions took place, while at Rome the sources include repeated accusations of persecution and expulsion, which may or may not be true.[18]

Egypt, Cyrenaica, Cyprus

In view of the prevailing studies of these popular areas, only a summary will be provided here. Egypt, a contiguous geographical neighbour of Palestine, had been the recipient of Jews (and other Syrians) for at least five centuries before the Roman takeover of both countries. Mention has already been made of the regiment of Jewish soldiers which was stationed at the southern Egyptian frontier during the Persian Empire;[19] coming closer to the Roman time, the Ptolemaic kings ruled both Egypt and Palestine between 301 BC and 195 BC, and so Jews were able to move into Egypt with relative ease, where they constituted a large proportion of the population of Alexandria, apparently from the foundation of that city. Within Egypt they were numerous enough to stage a major rebellion in 115–117, and while the Roman suppression of that rebellion may have reduced Jewish numbers drastically, it did not by any means eliminate

them.[20] Jews continued to be a substantial element in the Egyptian population throughout the Roman, Byzantine, Arab, and Turkish periods.[21]

Cyrenaica was also involved in the Egyptian Jewish rebellion, but it had also resonated to the even greater rebellion in Palestine in 66–73. No doubt the Jews of Cyrenaica were an offshoot of the Jewish population in Egypt, since the two countries were both under Ptolemaic rule for much of the two centuries after about 300 BC, though Cyrenaica was intermittently separate. The Jews of Egypt were numerous enough for it not to be a surprise that there was a substantial number of Jews living in both countries. In Cyrenaica they were numerous enough to stage two major rebellions against Roman rule. Once again, as in Egypt, the rebellions were not suppressed with such ruthlessness or in such detail as to eliminate the Jewish people entirely from the country.[22]

Another area in which a Jewish presence was sufficiently large and agitated to join in the 115–117 rebellion was Cyprus. Once more the fact that the island had been under Ptolemaic rule at the same time as Palestine would seem to be a quite sufficient explanation for the arrival and growth of the Jewish community there, one which continued, again with a lower profile, after the defeat of the rebels.[23]

Asia Minor

The presence of Jews in Asia Minor was due to other causes than Ptolemaic rule, though a good deal of the Asian coast along the Aegean Sea was under intermittent Ptolemaic control in the third century, and it is likely that Jews settled in such places as Ephesos. (Other Syrians, largely from Phoenicia, were also present in the Aegean area during the Hellenistic period.) Probably more important in bringing Jews to Asia Minor than Ptolemaic rule on the coast was the deliberate transplantation of a Jewish population by the Seleukid King Antiochos III after 212 BC. He brought his Jews from Babylonia as a means of installing a loyal population in the interior of Asia Minor, after that land had shown disturbing signs of disaffection. The Jews were in fact soldiers, supposedly 2000 of them, together with their families, which would suggest a total migration of perhaps 6000 people or more.[24] (The ploy did not work all that well, for Rome removed the region from Antiochos' control a couple of decades later; but the Jews remained; one wonders if the Babylonian origin of these Jews was somehow responsible for them ignoring the various rebellions in other regions.)

The Jews of Asia prospered along with the rest of the local population, under Seleukid and Attalid and then Roman rule, even if, like everyone in the eastern Roman territories, they suffered extortionate taxation in the late Republic.[25] One has only to see the excavated remains of the lavish synagogue at Sardis, a building which when complete must have been the size of a mediaeval cathedral or a modern concert hall, to appreciate the wealth that the Jewish community was able to command by the second century AD. This is, however, a community attested less by rebellions than by other evidence. Some records are epigraphic, but synagogues are noted in literary sources, and Jews are known in other Asia

Minor cities: at Sardis, Phokaia, Ephesos, Philadelphia, Hierapolis, and Laodikeia, which is more or less the region to be expected from the Ptolemaic and Seleukid influences.[26] Several other Jewish groups can be assumed from the travels of Paul of Tarsos at places particularly in the interior, though it is not always clear that he was actually meeting Jewish groups, rather than individuals, nor how large those groups were, nor if they survived for long after his visit.[27]

Some of these Jewish groups were, however, clearly substantial in numbers as well as wealth. Sardis had one such group, with its large synagogue implying a considerable number of Jews in the city: similarly, at Smyrna[28] and Ephesus, where large quantities of inscriptions have been collected.[29] At Hierapolis a considerable set of epitaphs has also been recorded.[30] Outlying inscriptions are at Prusa in Bithynia (possibly either Jewish or Christian)[31] and Phanagoria in the Crimean kingdom of the Bosporos, where a synagogue is referred to in the inscription.[32] The numbers of people involved are, however, not necessarily large and cannot be estimated with any accuracy or precision, and even a reference to the existence of a synagogue may in fact only be to a regular meeting in a private house.

Italy

The other well-sourced Jewish community was at Rome, by the first century BC the universal attraction for all footloose or displaced people, and of those ambitious for political and commercial power. The evidence here is partly literary, but also again largely epigraphic. There are repeated references to problems of Jews in Rome from 139 BC, when they are said to have been expelled from the city, though considerable doubt has been cast on this story.[33] In the early imperial period they were numerous and prominent enough for the Emperors Tiberius and Claudius to inflict various penalties on them.[34] That first instance (in 139 BC) may actually be an invention, but the later cases provide a clear basis of evidence that there was a recognisable group of Jews in the city by the first century AD which was large enough to have been developing for a considerable time, and which lasted for long after.[35] They were prominent enough to be a target for Juvenal's dislike, though that only put them in a very large company.[36]

For individuals it is necessary, as always, to look to the evidence of deaths and epitaphs. Jews were interred in at least two of the Roman catacombs, those at Monteverde and the Villa Torlonia.[37] The people recorded are, of course, generally from Rome itself, but there were also immigrants, such as Ammias, described as a Jewess from Laodiceia (presumably the Syrian city).[38] Others are reported to be from Caesarea (two people), Tiberias and Sepphoris in Palestine, Arqa and Tripolis in Phoenicia, Aquileia in northern Italy, Numidia, Catania in Sicily, and Achaia (Greece). These are variously described as Hebrews or Jews, or can be recognised as Jews from the distinctive signs on their gravestones – inscribed menorahs are particularly distinctive. These records also provide information about the presence of other Jews in their original homelands.

A secondary Jewish group, partly an offshoot from Rome, partly domiciled at a commercial centre, lived at Ostia, Rome's port. Whereas those interred in the Roman catacombs tended to be have been buried in the third or fourth centuries, those from Ostia are somewhat earlier. One commemorates C. Iulius Iustus, a *gerusiarch* of the community of the Jews of Ostia, which suggests that there was a considerable number in the city. There was a synagogue in the town, and this is the source of several of the inscriptions.[39]

Elsewhere in Italy the references to Jews are few and scattered, and in many cases have much the same origins as those in the catacombs – Aquileia and Sicily, for example.[40] One record from Naples reflects Jewish history in the homeland, the gravestone of Claudia Aster (that is, Esther), a slave owned by Ti. Claudius Proculus, a freedman; she is also defined as a 'prisoner from Jerusalem',[41] one of the few individuals enslaved after the destruction of the city to have any sort of personal memorial; it was presumably put up by Proculus himself, who gave her his name, which may imply that he had freed her.

The evidence for Jews in Italy outside Rome is extensive but thinly spread. Those noted in the previous paragraph are not the whole story, but even Solin's list, which includes many undated examples and some dubious cases, is not very long.[42] The evidence of synagogues is similarly problematic, since merely listing them does not show their origins nor when they were in use or the permanence of their existence, and gives no hint of the size of the Jewish community. At the same time, it seems evident that where there were only small groups of Jews in a place they tended to gather for worship in one of their homes, which thus may or may not be regarded as a synagogue (which, after all, merely means a meeting place). There are records of such buildings at Rome, of course, though only one,[43] and at Naples. That at Mediolanum (Milan) is probably late, since the city only developed into any size during the third century.[44] Some synagogues no doubt existed only for a relatively short time; others were only founded after the period here under study – that is, after c.300. The difficulties of the evidence are suggested by the assertion that the Jews of Venusia formed the second largest Jewish community in Italy (after Rome), an assertion based on the Jewish burials in the catacombs of the city, but there is no record of a synagogue in the city; conversely a synagogue is asserted to have existed at Dertona, but there is no other evidence of Jews there; in both cases it is legitimate to be sceptical of the existence of a Jewish group of any size.[45] In particular, to assert that a number of burials in a catacomb indicates a large Jewish community is not acceptable, for these burials are only very rarely dated, and they were spread over at least one or two centuries, or more; fifty burials in two centuries, say, may only indicate a population of a couple of dozen individuals at any one time.

The Jews of Italy were thus largely concentrated, as is only to be expected, at the city of Rome, but they were also present in a number of smaller cities, though in relatively small numbers, perhaps only single individuals or families. The record of their presence is both geographically and chronologically patchy, and must be considered with care. Simply that a Jew is recorded as living (or, more usually, dying) at a particular place in a particular time is not to be taken

as a record of a permanent Jewish presence, still less of that of a community of Jews. For example, one of the men recorded at Ostia, who died there, was an actor who was from Scythopolis in Palestine; he had strong ties to Damascus and Ascalon, and it is clear that he was only visiting Ostia, or perhaps passing through the city, when he died; he can therefore hardly be counted as a Jew living in Italy;[46] there may well be others in the same situation. In the same way, the record of the existence of synagogues is not necessarily a definitive indication that a Jewish community lived in those places, and synagogues were not necessarily large buildings nor permanent; they could well be parts of, or attached to, private houses, and might therefore only indicate the presence of a very small Jewish community – this is a factor which must also affect our estimation of Christianity's presence, for the early Christians also tended to use private homes for their worship (to be considered later).

Emigration

Outside the four best-recorded regions of Asia, Egypt, Cyrenaica, and Italy, the literary record is almost entirely blank, and epigraphy and archaeology are the only resources left. The destruction of Jerusalem and the enslavement of many of the survivors of the Jewish Rebellion effectively reduced the pressure of the large Palestinian population for emigration, one of the main forces behind the earlier translation of Jews to other parts of the Mediterranean. The *diaspora* ('dispersion') of Jews from Palestine has tended to be blamed on foreign conquerors: Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, and so on, though forcible expulsion from Palestine has been as likely to have been due to internal disputes or to civil wars as it was to foreign persecution. (The political terrorism of the Maccabees had been responsible for several expulsions, of Greeks, Idumaeans, and Jews, from Judaea and Palestine generally.) The Palestinian region was certainly well populated, even perhaps overpopulated, by the end of the first century BC, but the precise timing and scale of emigration in individual cases, as well as the precise reasons for it, are all either unknown or conjectural.[47]

The recovery of the population of Palestine after AD 70 came slowly, hindered by the even more savage warfare of 132–135, but the pressure to emigrate may well have continued from a different cause than overpopulation, since the province remained effectively under military occupation after AD 70, and the Roman authorities were no doubt very vigilant to detect and suppress any sort of dissent (note the arrival of the legion and at least six auxiliary regiments in the 80s). The destinations of emigrants would most likely, in the first instance, be towards areas of established Jewish presence, where some of the emigrants at least may have had relatives, and where they could expect assistance from fellow Jews. But it would be better to avoid areas where there had been trouble in the past; an unwelcoming attitude was clearly less likely to be encountered in Asia Minor, and perhaps in Rome, than it was in Egypt or Cyrenaica.

The lands to which the emigrants went beyond these familiar regions therefore only received Jewish immigrants some decades, or even centuries, after the

troubles in Palestine and Egypt, and quite probably the initial emigration to these 'new' destinations came from the Jewish communities already established outside Palestine. One would expect, for example, that the Jews who established the community in North Africa will have come at first from Rome, since the two areas had strong commercial ties during the imperial period and even before (note here the burial of at least one man from Numidia at Rome).[48] The lands to the north of Italy, and the frontier lands strung along the Danube and the Rhine, were much less likely to be the destinations of emigrants (though there is the instance of a Jewish family, driven from, or fleeing from, Judaea in the aftermath of the revolt of 66–73, who followed the legion XV *Apollinaris* back to its camp at Carnuntum on the Danube; the father's name appears to be M(?). Mulvius – a Jewish Roman citizen, therefore – and he was accompanied by four family members[49]).

Africa

The available evidence tends to support this interpretation. In North Africa there is no archaeological evidence for a Jewish presence before the third century AD.[50] There is a Jewish necropolis to the north of Carthage, at Gammarth, where the burials have been dated mainly to the third century and later; it is in the form of catacombs, each section holding up to twenty graves.[51] Outside Carthage there are single examples from a dozen or so places, spread from Tunisia to Morocco. As to buildings, Tertullian claims that a synagogue existed at Carthage in his time, which would be after AD 200 or a little later; since he lived in Carthage at that time, and was a native of the city, this is good testimony;[52] there was also another to the north of the city at Hammam Lif, which may have only been constructed considerably later. Together with the evidence of the necropolis, however, it seems clear that a Jewish community was established in the city by the end of the second century, though it was not necessarily very numerous. The thin evidence for the rest of North Africa, however, indicates that few Jews moved out of the main city – there are just nine places, at each of which a single Jewish tombstone has been found, in the whole of the rest of North Africa.

Spain

Spain was even farther from Palestine than was North Africa, and was a good distance also from Italy, though strong commercial contacts with Rome are attested above all by the records of the imports of wine and oil – the heaps of pottery fragments at Monte Testaccio in Rome are one graphic indication – and of metals, of which Spain was one of the empire's major sources. The initial evidence for Jews in Spain is usually taken to be a remark by Paul of Tarsus that he was planning to go to Spain to convert the Jews there to his version of Christianity. This is then taken as evidence that there were already Jews in Spain to be converted, but Paul did not, so far as we know, actually go there, and

his information was not necessarily accurate either (and the comment may by apochryphal). This cannot be taken as providing evidence for the presence of Jews in the peninsula in the first century AD.[53]

Other Spanish evidence for Jews in that country is equally vague or inconsequential.[54] The destination of the exile of Herod Antipas, the former ethnarch of the Jews in Palestine, is said in one source to have been to Spain, but in another to be Gaul,[55] but neither is evidence of a wider Jewish community in either region any more than is that of the dead actor at Ostia. Otherwise the archaeological – or rather the artefactual – evidence consists of occasional inscriptions of various sorts which are interpreted as Jewish and which are dated vaguely by various authorities, and often their conclusions are disputed by others.[56] One has the impression that some researchers are all too keen to find evidence and to support the earliest possible date, not necessarily from good historical motives.

The one firm item of evidence for the presence of Jews in Spain is in the form of the declarations of the (Christian) Council of Elvira of AD 306, which claimed to prohibit Christians from marrying Jews or having meals with them.[57] This is, of course, firm evidence that there were Jews in Spain at that time with whom Christians would wish to marry or to dine, though it is hardly good evidence for a substantial Jewish community.[58] From then on there are several literary references which tend to confirm the presence of Jews, though how first-hand this evidence was is difficult to estimate. Two items at least, from Gregory of Elvira in the second half of the fourth century, and from Severus of Minorca a little later, could well be from men speaking from personal experience (like Tertullian at Carthage), but their evidence is somewhat late if one is considering the Jewish presence before AD 300.[59]

On the whole, it seems that these occasional items may imply the presence of the occasional Jew or Jewish family in Spain from the first century AD, though the details are widely scattered in time and place (rather in the same way as the evidence of Jews in North Africa outside Carthage). Only from a little before 300 can we be reasonably certain that there were enough Jews in Spain to constitute a clearly defined community – at which time, of course, they were supposed to be isolated from Christian contacts, according to the persecuting Council of Elvira – a council, note, whose decrees had no legal force at the time. Outside this particular item there is little more than isolated pieces of evidence; only one item, the grave of a Jewish child called Salomonula from Abdera on the south coast of the peninsula, can be taken as indicating the residence there of a family, and it is vaguely dated only to the third century.[60] By the fourth century there were synagogues at Tarragona and Elche at least.[61] By 300, therefore, it can be said that there were therefore probably enough Jews in Spain to be widely identified as such (and to frighten the timorous Christian clerics meeting at Elvira), and their numbers had presumably been expanding over the previous century or so. As a community, though, the Jews in Spain can have been no more than occasional individuals or families until about 300.[62]

The rest of the empire

The northern parts of the Roman Empire, from the Black Sea to Britannia – the Balkan, Danubian, German, Gallic, and British provinces – exhibit much the same lack of evidence as Spain, but without the confirmation of a Jewish community provided by a hopefully persecuting Christian Council. The evidence is mainly epigraphic, and is fragmentary and thin, and this undoubtedly reflects the reality of the thin and scattered Jewish presence.[63]

There is a certain amount of written evidence for Jews in Greece in the first century AD, and indeed before; how far that continued later is less clear. Paul's wanderings, as related in *Acts* and his surviving letters, provides evidence of a sort for a few Jews in several of the Greek cities, but one wonders if the author was exaggerating. Some confirmation arrives from records of the existence of synagogues at Athens, Delos, and Aegina,[64] which were relatively out-of-the-way places by the Roman imperial period, so others may be expected in the more populous places, such as Corinth. Philo of Alexandria lists most of Greece as having Jewish communities,[65] but the passage is part of a speech he puts into the mouth of King Agrippa I, and is thus both an unreliable witness and probably a considerable exaggeration – confirmatory evidence would be needed. Some of this does come from the epigraphic record, apart from the synagogues, but most of the records are undated, and probably come from a later period, when the evidence is somewhat firmer. There are Jewish graves in a necropolis at Beroia in Macedon,[66] but there are only two of them, so this is not a powerful confirmation of Philo's rather extravagant claim; records from Thessalonica and Philippi are no better.

Summary

The influence of those Jews who lived outside Palestine on their gentile neighbours is impossible to estimate. A few pointers and suggestions are worth noting. First, there was clearly some hostility to them, notably in Rome and Egypt, which can best be ascribed to the collective memory of their rebellions, and the extensive killing and damage these caused. Such 'memory' was perhaps stronger amongst Christians such as Tertullian and the participants at the Elvira Council – who were in effect in competition with the Jews – than amongst their mutual pagan neighbours, unless they were dyspeptic haters of almost everyone, like Juvenal. Such hostility, however, may not have extended to individuals, and it is notable that Jews were not shy of identifying themselves as Jews, at least on their epitaphs and in their attendance at synagogues, a practice which would make them conspicuous. (If they did conceal their religion or identity, of course, we do not know of them – any evidence of such practice is likely to provoke assertions from some students that there 'must have been' many more Jews than are recorded, which is not evidence of anything except their lack of credibility.)

In most parts of the empire the Jews were far too few in number to have had any real effect on their fellow citizens. Even in the second century they tended to keep themselves apart, as in the Jewish-only cemeteries at Carthage and in parts

of the Roman catacombs. The extent of Jewish proselytism in the first century AD has been much discussed, and its effects both exaggerated and questioned. After the great rebellions it is likely that this was further restrained. There seems to have been a pro-Jewish fashion in the upper classes in Rome for a time in the late first century, but it did not last long. Sympathisers who might attend the synagogues, but who did not convert to Judaism formally were at times called 'god-fearers'. They appear sporadically in Rome and elsewhere – notably in inscriptional evidence at Aphrodisias in Asia Minor.[67] But if they were termed 'god-fearers', they were therefore not actually Jews; there was always the major obstacle for men in the Jewish requirement for circumcision.

In general, it would seem unlikely that many were gathered to the Jewish faith who were not already Jews, given the obstacles and the certain hostility such a conversion would arouse.[68] However, one may note that the men who met at Elvira in Spain in c.306 were clearly scared that the Jews amongst them were a threat, hence their attempted distancing of their own Christian followers from them; that this was followed by the Jews building the first synagogues in Spain might suggest that their fear was justified, or alternatively that their attempts at *apartheid* were successful.

There is also the issue of the great Jewish rebellions. The motives of the rebels in Palestine in 60–73 and 132–135 are relatively obvious, in that this had been the place where a Jewish state had been created in the last two centuries BC and which had apparently flourished for a time, at least in the Jews' nostalgic recollections. Political nostalgia and a pervasive resentment at Roman rule may be sufficient explanation for the outbreaks, though it was also fuelled by a powerful religious sentiment as well – which had, of course, been present from the start in the Maccabean rebellion – and sparked off by specific incidents. But the motives for the Jewish rebellions in Egypt, Cyprus, and Cyrenaica were surely less territorial and more precisely religious.

It has to be emphasised, however, how very unusual in the ancient world these rebellions were. No other people or community fought in such a way for religious reasons at any time before the widespread adoption of monotheistic religions in the Roman Empire, and to some extent in the Sassanid Empire. It must also be pointed out that none of these rebellions succeeded in doing anything other than destroying the rebellious groups themselves.

In summary, it is certain that there were considerable Jewish populations in certain, very restricted, areas of the Roman Empire: Palestine, of course, and Egypt and Cyrenaica, all of whose Jewish populations had been badly damaged by their revolts; Asia Minor; and Rome. Outside these particular areas, the Jewish presence was thin to absent for much of the early imperial period. A small community developed in North Africa, centred, not surprisingly, on Carthage, and there were some Jews in Greece, probably descendants of emigrants of the Hellenistic period. Elsewhere Jews were largely absent, or, if present, they were individuals or at most single families. As such, it is inevitable that Jewish influence on their surrounding non-Jewish populations was very limited; only in Asia Minor and at Rome, in both cases briefly, was there any.

III. Jupiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus

The shrine of Baal-Hadad in the Bekaa Valley – Baalbek – probably originated, like so much else in religious terms in Syria, in the Iron Age. A deep cleft has been found which contains an early altar, and in Roman times (and probably earlier) there was an oracle there. The destruction of cities and urban communities by the Assyrians and Babylonians did not seriously affect local shrines such as this, nor the rural communities which used them, and their survival brought local distinction to such shrines and temples as symbols of continuity and even defiance. It may not have received much encouragement during the century of Ptolemaic rule, when the Bekaa Valley was a militarised frontier area, but after 195, Seleukid tolerance and the kings' encouragement of urban development will have stimulated further local devotion as the population grew and achieved some new prosperity. The valley to the north of the temple, the upper Orontes River, was resettled and developed agriculturally after 200 BC,[69] and this would have increased the numbers of Syrians who were likely to worship at the shrine. It is possible, even probable, that a temple of the Greek type was constructed at the site in the second century BC, though the evidence is only the assumed reuse of its stones in the later buildings of the Roman period. At the end of the Hellenistic period it had a chief priest who grew into the political chief of the Ituraeans – Menneas, Ptolemy, Zenodoros – and who succeeded the Seleukid kings as the local political power.[70]

No doubt the Baalbek shrine-cum-temple-cum-oracle flourished under the Ituraean rulers, though these did not last long, being removed by Augustus by 20 BC. A local monarchy with variable boundaries and a variety of kings, usually of the Jewish Herodian family, continued for another century in the old Ituraean mountain region, but the decisive development in the Roman time was the foundation of the *colonia* at Berytus on the Mediterranean coast. This was another place which had grown without much royal assistance – other than being sacked occasionally in the Hellenistic period, and rebuilt each time – but it had a notable strategic position, given the political condition in Syria after the rise of Herod in Palestine, while the bay on which it stood allowed the growth of a sheltered port. The coast road running north–south passed by and through the city, and it was at the coastal end of the easiest pass through the Lebanon Mountain into the Bekaa Valley and then on to Damascus; it occupied a comparatively wide, for the region, local plain between the sea and the hills. To the Romans, conscious of the city's strategic situation, holding Berytus was a strategic necessity. They were firmly established in north Syria, where their power was anchored by four legions and supported by the cities which they favoured, but they were constantly apprehensive, correctly enough, of likely trouble in south Syria (Palestine), an area in which, like that of the Ituraeans, repeatedly shifted between kings and Roman governors, and often blew up into rebellion and war. Augustus planted a *colonia* at Berytus, probably in two stages, first soon after he took control in Syria in 30 BC, at which point he temporarily removed the Ituraean ruler Zenodoros, then in 15 BC (by which time the Ituraean monarchy had

been finally removed), he expanded the *colonia*'s territory by including within its *chora* a part of the Bekaa Valley, including Baalbek and the shrine. This ensured that the military colony – the veterans of two legions were the founders, and they attracted others later – held an extensive territory and commanded that strategic harbour and the route nexus.[71]

So the Roman *colonia* of Berytos, its boundaries expanded into the interior, found itself in control of an ancient holy place which was probably marked by a relatively small Hellenistic temple and shrine which had slowly developed since 200 BC. Baalbek had already received the name Heliopolis – 'Sun City' – and since the name is Greek, and Berytus was a Latin-speaking city, it is probable that the Greek name existed in the Seleukid period, and that the god worshipped there was the sun, the god also worshipped at Emesa and other Syrian places, along with his children. But the deities who were worshipped there were Romanised under the influence of the Latin-speaking colonists. The three Aramaean deities present at the temple were Baal (also Hadad), Aliyan his daughter, and Anat his son. Baal is 'lord', and he was the only means by which worshippers could communicate with the supreme divine couple El and Ashera.[72] To Romans the triad of Baal-Aliyan-Anat could be translated to Jupiter-Venus-Mercury. Whereas the original shrine-cum-oracle (and perhaps the temple) included all these deities, the Roman influence pragmatically and explicitly separated them; each one was eventually given its own temple, though this took two centuries to be fully worked out in stone.

The first Roman temple (as opposed to a possibly preexisting Greek one) was being built by about AD 60.[73] There is no sign even at that date that this was a sanctuary of more than local importance. It received its real boost during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, both of whom were manic builders. The Jupiter temple was expanded and rebuilt during and after their reigns, and presumably with intermittent financial help from imperial funds.[74] This produced the great set of temples whose ruins are now visible. The temple of 'Bacchus' (actually probably Mercury, formerly Anat) was added in the mid-second century, that of Venus (Aliyan) later. But the most important was always that of Jupiter (Baal/Hadad), which the native Syrians still no doubt referred to as that of Hadad, and many Greek-speakers would have referred to as Zeus. For much of the second century this last was the only major structure on the site, even though the triad of deities was always recognised as being the gods in occupation.

The two emperors Trajan and Hadrian have both been supposed to have visited the site, though the sources for these visits are either not good or do not exist. In the midst of his preparations to invade Parthia in 114, and again on his retirement from the east, Trajan spent some time at Antioch. While there, and before campaigning into Armenia, he could have gone to Heliopolis to consult the oracle. The source for this is Macrobius,[75] writing in the fifth century AD, who is generally reliable and appears to have had access to a wide variety of sources now lost. On the other hand, the supposed question which Trajan put to the oracle, and the oracle's response, are surely invented. Trajan is said to have asked if he would return to Rome after his campaign, and the answer was that he

would not. Since this was actually what happened, the assumption must be that the oracle's response was later fabricated – also it must be noted that the question was peculiarly bland, even irrelevant to the emperor's plans. Nevertheless the visit of the emperor seems very possible; if he did put a question to the oracle he is most likely to have done so in secret; Macrobius was surely misinformed.[76]

Hadrian's visit is not actually recorded either, though in terms of opportunity, it might be thought the more likely. He was governor of Syria under Trajan for three years during the Parthian War, and was in Antioch again over the winter of 129–130 during his empire-wide travels as emperor. In this visit we know he made at least two side trips from the city, once to Mount Kasios by Seleukeia-in-Pieria (the home of another local deity) and a second excursion to Palmyra. Berytos was the only Latin and Latin-speaking *colonia* in Syria, and it seems highly likely that any emperor present in Syria for more than a day or two would visit that place if he could. It may be also that he would then visit Heliopolis, where by this time the building process was thoroughly under way. There is, however, no direct evidence for his visiting either place, and the chain of conjecture is rather too long and attenuated for comfort.[77]

The date of the construction of the Jupiter temple is unclear, though its sheer size implies that the work went on for decades. It seems to have been more or less finished, as was that of 'Bacchus', by the end of the second century, which is not inconsistent with its being under construction for eight decades, assuming that a start was made about AD 100 – it compares in size and its long building history with the great mediaeval cathedrals. This long building time reduces the financial difficulty, since the cost was spread over a century or more, and there are signs that the cities of Syria, including Antioch, may have contributed; but the enormous size of the main building does assume access to large financial resources, and so we come back to the imperial power. During the second century there were repeated imperial visits to Syria – Trajan, Hadrian, Lucius Verus, Septimius Severus – which could have been the perfect occasions for displays of imperial largesse. The building was something which had clearly been planned on the largest scale from the very start, and a degree of certainty about the availability of the required finance must have existed from the beginning. It is this place which was the source of the spread of the worship of Jupiter Helipolitanus into the rest of the empire.

Puteoli

The point about the speculation concerning the whereabouts of Trajan and Hadrian when they were in Syria is relevant to the discussion of the spread of the worship of Jupiter Heliopolitanus because the earliest clearly dated example of such worship in the empire outside Syria is from Puteoli in Italy and is dated to 116, in the last year of Trajan's reign, while he was campaigning in the east. It is an inscribed stone, a dedication to Trajan for his victories and marking the twentieth anniversary of his accession to imperial rule. The group who set up the stone described themselves as 'the Berytians living in Puteoli'.[78] There are

several more records of dedications to Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Puteoli, but no others were so precisely dated – some could therefore be earlier than 116. That commemoration would be a most appropriate response by the exiles to news of the operations in Syria and Babylonia, and, perhaps, to the reports of an imperial visit to the temple.

Then, in the mid-second century, L. Stennius Priscus, a veteran soldier, was the priest of the deity at Puteoli.[79] Marcus Ulpius Sabinus, who by his name was likely active in the second century, called himself the curator, and reported on a marble plaque that he had restored the ruinous temple in the town – it had thus been neglected for some time;[80] a later curator, Aurelius Theodorus, whose name implies a third-century lifetime (post-212), is also recorded on a fragment of a marble plaque. He may have been a priest (*sacerdos*), or he may be the son of a man called Sacerdos, the wording is ambiguous.[81] Another priest, Sextus Hermianus, is also known from an inscription.[82]

There was, therefore, at Puteoli a temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus which a group of men originally from Berytus attended, and probably built, and which was served by curators and priests during the second century and well into the third; at one point it was necessary to instigate substantial repairs, which suggests a reasonably long existence for the building, if also some neglect. The date of the temple's original building is not known, but the presence of the priest-veteran Stennius in the Antonine period shows that it certainly existed by then[83] – it would be appropriate that the 'Berytians in Puteoli' would be stimulated to build their own shrine in emulation of the progressive construction of that at Baalbek. The connection between Berytus and Puteoli was no doubt commercial, both places being major ports, and it seems that there were enough men from Berytus in the town by Trajan's reign for them to form a social club whose activities included the building of, and attendance at, a temple dedicated to the god of their hometown.

Rome

A priesthood of Jupiter Heliopolitanus is also attested at Rome, as is a direct connection with Berytus, though the initial records were produced – or at least the earliest dated ones are – by a man called M. Antonius Gaionas, described as *cistiber Augustorum*.[84] Gaionas was first recorded setting up an inscribed stone on the Janiculum at Rome praying for the safe return of Commodus. This was in 175/176, when Commodus was still the heir of his father, Marcus Aurelius. He was made joint emperor in that year, but this was also the very year when Avidius Cassius, the governor of Syria and the whole east, went into rebellion. Gaionas was a Syrian name, and no doubt all Syrians, including Berytians, would be regarded with suspicion under the fraught circumstances; thus a public, prominent, and permanent offering for a joint emperor's safety would be a sensible move. It clearly worked, for Gaionas was able to set up a commemorative column – or he inscribed an existing column – ten years later in the same place, and to do the same in Ostia.[85]

There would thus seem to be a temple to the god Julpiter Heliopolitanus on the Janiculum, since both of Gaionas' commemorations, and several others, were found in much the same place. It seems that a shrine of sorts, even perhaps a temple, existed in Gaionas' time; the earliest date known is 175/176 and so the shrine existed by then, and for an unknown time before that. Two priests are known, one called Herrenius, who is named on a statue base for one M. Helvius Rusticus in the 'Heliopolitanum'.[86] The other priest was Terentius Damario, who was named as such on a statue base, with his mother, her other son, and her grandson, which was a dedication to Jupiter Heliopolitanus and to 'the Genius of Fornia and the people of this place' – presumably meaning the temple, or possibly Rome. The names of all four people are Greek – Nicecum (the mother), Damario, and Onesimus (the other son). Damario's period of office as priest is stated to be a *lustrum* – usually a period of five years.[87] The connection with Syria is supported by these names and is reinforced by a statue (though only its base survives) dedicated by L. Trebonius Sossianus, the centurion of the *frumentarii* of the legion IV *Flavia Gordiana* – he was also from 'Colonia Heliopolitanus'.[88] (Heliopolis had been made into a separate political entity by Septimius Severus, and named Colonia Julia Augusta Felix Heliopolitanus in honour of his wife.) The legion's name indicates that this was during the reign of Gordian III (238–244). Also to be dated to the first half of the third century in all probability is an altar set up by two decurions of a vexillation of the *ala Ituraeorum* – Heliopolis/Baalbek was thus evidently still seen as a temple for the Ituraeans.[89]

The Heliopolitanum sanctuary was placed outside the *pomerium* of Rome, and in fact it was also outside the line of the walls as later built under the Emperor Aurelian. It was linked with the old Roman sanctuary of the Furrinae nymphs, which was in a water-worn grotto and beside a spring. The temple was apparently placed over this grotto, and was burnt down in the mid-third century, either by accident or by arson. The inscribed dedications were retrieved and placed in the grotto, and a new and larger temple was built to replace that which had been destroyed. The cult in the new temple was much less exclusively attached to the Syrian gods, taking in Egyptian and other gods as well, and was evidently also somewhat affected by Christian practices, and by Christian competition – hence presumably the greater inclusivity. The discovery of a human skull under the main altar when the sanctuary was excavated suggests an initiatory human sacrifice – illegal under Roman law – of which it had been accused by the Christians. The sanctuary went on being used well into the fourth century.[90]

The east

Other dedications to Jupiter Heliopolitanus come from the 'civilian', or at least less militarised, areas of the empire. One is from Aigai in Cilicia, by a man called Aptos; it is undated and does not signify any shrine or temple at the place.[91] Not far off at Tolcina in Pisidia, in the mountains northwest of Cilicia, there was a temple to Zeus Heliopolitanos by about AD 200, according to a mention in a dedication from there.[92] Another record is from Athens, from the reign of

Antoninus Pius, in the name of Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury of Heliopolis. The man who set up the altar, Q. Tedius Maximus, is also known from Heliopolis itself, where he set up a dedication to the emperor, thus providing the date for the Athenian stone.[93]

These are commemorations, each by one man only, but, combined with those in Italy they show that the worship of Jupiter Heliopolitanus was being exported by people from Syria, specifically by those from Berytus (at Puteoli) or from Heliopolis itself, and by men who had Greek and Syrian names. The connection is thus strong, but there is nothing deliberate or organised about the spread of the worship. Each of the items, even the Roman temple, was the result of individual local ventures, as by 'the Berytians of Puteoli', or Maximus at Athens.

Africa

There were a series of commemorations and dedications which were explicitly military, all from stations on or near the frontier. Two undated altars were set up at the town of Lambaesis in Numidia, one by a prefect of the legion III *Augusta* (whose base Lambaesis was at the time), P. Seius Rufus, who came from Teate Marrucinorum in Italy,[94] the other by two centurions and their wives (who were sisters or cousins) and one of their daughters.[95] Both altars were to Jupiter Heliopolitanus and both centurions had served in Syrian legions, C. Iulius Valerianus in IV *Scythica*, Iulius Proculus in III *Gallica*, though neither appears to have been doing so at the time of the dedications. Valerianus was then serving as centurion in III *Augusta*, and Proculus in V *Macedonica*: Proculus was presumably on a visit to Lambaesis, not stationed there. It is worth remarking also that III *Augusta* had received a substantial reinforcement of Syrians at some point (see Chapter 5). Both of these dedications were, it may be noted, made by people who were only temporarily at Lambaesis; no other dedication to this god is known at the city.[96]

The north

On the northern frontier there were inscriptions naming Jupiter Heliopolitanus at several places from Dacia to Britannia, though there are relatively few of them. Three dedications are from Dacia: two from Micia, one by a centurion of the legion XIII *Gemina*, which was based at nearby Apulum after the definitive conquest of the region, the other by a centurion from the legion IV *Flavia Felix*, which had been part of the Dacian expeditionary force under Trajan. The third Dacian commemoration is a marble plaque from Sarmezigetusa from another centurion of the legion XIII *Gemina*; the city was a *colonia* set up in part for the veterans of that legion. There is no obvious connection between these men, except that their legions had all served in Syria during the Parthian Wars of the early third century.[97]

Four sites in the Pannonian provinces have produced inscriptions naming Jupiter Heliopolitanus. At Aquincum (Budapest) a veteran of the legion II *Adiutrix*, which was based at the city for most of its existence from Domitian's

reign onwards, set up a statue addressed to 'Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dulceno Heliopolitanus', neatly combining the two Jupiters, of Heliopolis and Doliche (on whom see the next section).[98] The date of the statue base is only vaguely 'third century', but the legion had been in Syria in the 160s as part of Lucius Verus' Parthian War, and again in the Severan wars under Septimius and/or Caracalla. It is just possible that the veteran's devotion to the dual Syrian-Roman god dated from one of those expeditions.[99]

The same linkage of the two Jupiters is visible in an altar set up by three brothers at Neviodunum (Drnovo) in Pannonia, in the valley of the River Save on the road from the middle Danube to Italy. Both Dolichenus and Heliopolitanus are the addressees on the altar, which, from the names of two of the brothers, is probably of the third century.[100] At Siscia, also in Pannonia Superior, the *beneficarius* L. Virilius Pupus set up an altar to Jupiter Heliopolitanus; no date can be assigned.[101]

Carnuntum was the legionary base of XIV *Gemina* in Pannonia Superior (just to the east of Vienna), and for a time the city was the headquarters of Marcus Aurelius in his German War, and so the effective centre of the imperial government. The site has produced a set of inscriptions all of which have either precise or at least approximate dates, and are connected with a temple to Jupiter Heliopolitanus. One of the earliest appears to be an altar set up by L. Pompeius Caeneus, '*princeps*' of the legion XIV *Gemina Martia Victrix*. This legion arrived at Carnuntum in or a little after 117, after campaigning in Dacia; there is no sign that it ever campaigned in the east, though it may have sent a vexillation to one of the several wars. Its title of *Martia Victrix* fell out of use in the early third century, so we may take the altar to be most likely of the second century.[102] The second early example is a small column set up for the god by a tribune of the same legion, Cornelius Vitalis, which names the legion only as *Gemina*. This might make it of the third century, as might the lack of a *praenomen* for Cornelius; there is also a broken plaque on which the name Ulpius survives.[103]

Another inscription from Carnuntum is precisely dated to the reign of Commodus, though several dates during his reign have been suggested for it. It is an altar for both Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Heliopolitanus, and it names two *curatores*, a secretary (*scriba*), and two priests as the originators. Two of these men were of Greek or more probably Syrian origin, C. Iulius Dionisus and Q. Gavius Zosimus – note the Greek *cognomina*.[104] Another inscription is on a small column and is addressed to Jupiter Heliopolitanus and Venus Victrix – two of the Baalbek deities; again two of the men named are described as priests, and the third is M. Titius Heliodorus, an *augustalis* and an *augur* of the *colonia* Carnuntum; his name marks him as probably Syrian. Carnuntum was made a *colonia* by Septimius and the reference to the *colonia* thus dates the inscription as after 193.[105]

The priests named in the first inscription, the altar, are named only as Bassus and Crispus; in the second, the small column, the priests each have two names, Vibius Crescens and Herrenius Nigrinianus. These names would suggest that they were not Roman citizens (other men on the stones have the full *tria nomina*). One wonders also if listing two names of priests on inscriptions which name

the two Jupiters might be significant; perhaps the two cults were in process of uniting, at least at this site. It is also worth noting that the priest Herrenius Nigrinianus shares his first name with Herrenius, the priest at the Janiculum temple at Rome. It may be that there was a family of these priests; this, however, is the only hint of any direct connection between worshippers or priests – except the connection which leads back to Heliopolis, of course.

The final example from Carnuntum is a bronze plaque set up by Sex. Titius Moderatus, a veteran of the XIV *Gemina* legion, another legion which served in the east in the 160s and the 190s. The plaque is a dedication to Jupiter Heliopolitanus and, like the fragmentary plaque naming Ulpius, is said to have been found in the *temenus* of the god's temple.[106] This would fit with the presence of the priests in the other inscriptions, though those other inscriptions do not refer to a temple. (Moderatus also had the same *nomen* – Titius – as the *augur* of Carnuntum some decades before.)

These fragments of evidence at Carnuntum suggest strongly that there was an active cult of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in both the legionary camp and the associated town, that the temple had been constructed by the late second century – some pottery lamps of that period name the god[107] – and that it was served by a succession of priests, possibly in union with the cult of Dolichenus, and with one or two active priests. There was an organised administrative system in addition, with curators and a secretary. Several of the men involved had Greek *cognomina*, which links back to the origin of the cult in Syria, just as does the presence of men from Berytus at the Puteoli and Roman temples, and the service of the legions in the east on several occasions. In addition, the participation of an *augur* of the *colonia* at the temple implies the full integration of the cult with the *colonia*. It was, as at Rome and Puteoli, part of the normal background of life in Carnuntum, a cult fully domesticated in the camp and the *colonia*.

From southern Germany there are two single inscriptions concerning the god. An altar was set up by T. Flavius Castris, a soldier of the legion XIII *Gemina* at Nassenfels, close to Eichstatt in Bavaria, which was in the Raetian province. Castris' *cognomen* indicates that he had been born in a military camp, the son of a soldier, and he had inherited his father's (or more likely his grandfather's) citizenship. He was living, or at least he set up his altar, in a village apparently called *Vicus Scutarensium* – 'the Shields' village' – which would appear by its name to be a settlement beside a military camp. The date is probably second century, though the family citizenship evidently ('Flavius') dates back to the late first century.[108]

At a *castellum* on the German *limes* near Stockstadt the prefect of *cohors* I *Aquitanorum* set up an altar to Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Venus Felix, and Mercurio Augusto in 249. This is the only military example where all three Baalbek deities are named together, and it is suitable that the prefect actually came from Berytos. (By this time the third temple, of Venus, had been built at Heliopolis, and perhaps this marks the occasion where she had finally entered fully into the three-deity system, at least in terms of the Latin-speaking followers.) The prefect had a good, lengthy, cumbersome, third-century name, M. Iulius Rufus Papinarius Sentius Gemellus, quite a suitable set of names for a man from a self-consciously Latin

colonia.[109] In southern Gaul C. Iulius Tiberinus made a dedication to the god – Jupiter Heliopolitanus only – at Nemausus, to which city he had retired after his military service.[110]

The final known, and the westernmost and northernmost, example of devotion to Jupiter Heliopolitanus is an altar found at the fort of Carvoran on Hadrian's Wall in Britannia. The originator's name is incomplete – Iulius Pol[lio] – and the date is not known, but it is clearly relevant that this was the station of the Syrian (or ex-Syrian) *cohors* I *Hamiorum* for much of the second and early third centuries.[111]

Summary

It cannot be said that the worship of Jupiter Heliopolitanus was very intense. It was certainly geographically widespread, from Syria to Britannia, and the sanctuary at Rome was of considerable size and presumably wealth, but the worship hardly penetrated deeply into Roman imperial society. It would necessarily take some time to become established in any single particular place, so most of the records are dedications by only one or two people. Only in four cases does it appear that there was a settled community prepared to invest considerable time and money to build a temple, and perhaps to continue to supply funds. So at Puteoli it was probably the merchant community of men from Berytus, and at Rome perhaps a group of resident Syrians, who established and maintained the temples, though it is to be noted that the Puteoli temple suffered enough neglect that it needed repair halfway through its life. At Rome the destruction of the first temple was quickly followed by the rescue of the old dedications and the construction of a new building, and the continuation of worship in the building for another century or so. The worshippers at Carnuntum have a more bureaucratic aspect, as perhaps fits with their situation in the military camp – the Roman army was a very bureaucratic organisation; they probably had a temple, and certainly had an administrative system, but, maybe because of this, there is no sign of any fervour of belief. Nothing can be said about the temple at Tolcina in Pisidia other than that, if a temple was really built there, it suggests that a considerable number of people of reasonable wealth in the city will have combined to build and organise it.

Most of the single dedications are by military men, with the obvious corollary that they were therefore not part of an organised cult, since soldiers were often moved to a new posting. But by the second century the legions at least tended to have settled down in a camp for extended periods, which may be the origin of the Carnuntum temple; the presence of the imperial court there for several years might also have stimulated building and investment. There is some indication that the worship of Jupiter Heliopolitanus had spread out from the Syrian population outside Syria to non-Syrians, for several of the military dedications show no obvious connections with Syria. On the other hand, all the temples where there is any evidence seem to have relied on priests and officials who were of Syrian origin. There were thus clearly two elements in the expansion of

the worship: the migration of Syrians to other parts of the empire, carrying the worship, so to speak, with them – Gaionas in Rome, the priests at Carnuntum, and the 'Berytians of Puteoli' are examples – and, on the other hand, the devotion of ordinary soldiers and officers, in many cases after probable service in Syria, whose devotion was personal rather than institutional. The appeal may have been precisely because it was Syrian, since the worship of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in several cases overlapped with, or joined with, that of Jupiter Dolichenus. In another direction it may well have melded with that of Jupiter of Rome; men of a commonsensical turn of mind might well argue that it was easier to simply worship Jupiter than to go to all the trouble of organising the worship of what may have seemed to be no more than a colonial branch of the god's worship. That is, Jupiter Heliopolitanus outside Syria was mainly a Roman deity, as it clearly became in the replacement temple at Rome, and only those with ties to Syria seem likely to have insisted on the Heliopolitanus part.

IV. *Dea Syra* – the Syrian goddess

The Syrian Goddess was Atargatis. She was a universal Syrian deity with shrines and observances throughout that country and eastwards through Mesopotamia – at Harran, Hatra, and Dura-Europos, for example; in Syria her cult is known at Damascus, in the Hawran, and is noted, for example in the trans-Jordanian lands at the time of the Maccabean revolt in the 160s BC, and in the Bekaa.[112] The most important of her temples – or perhaps just the most famous – was at Hierapolis-Bambyke in north Syria, but this was clearly not the only one. The chief priest there was also regarded as the goddess' husband and took the name, or title, of Abd-Hadad – son of Hadad – which made him also Atargatis' son. The temple and its procedures are the subject of a well-known essay included in the works of Lucian of Samosata, which describes, and quite probably much exaggerates, even distorts, the particular rites there in the second and third centuries AD.[113]

The goddess has also been traced back to the Hittite pantheon,[114] which is hardly surprising since north Syria was a centre of Hittite and neo-Hittite power and kingdoms for several centuries before these states were destroyed in the Assyrian conquest. The temple and the town around it survived the dismal centuries following the Assyrians until the town was converted into a Hellenistic city – Hierapolis, the holy city – by Seleukos I.[115] This change would have involved imposing a Greek-speaking ruling class on the Syrian Aramaic-speaking population, but it did not require the removal of the temple hierarchy. Indeed, the Abd-Hadad in office in 332, during Alexander's campaign through Syria and Egypt, issued coins claiming a royal title, perhaps in imitation of the kings of several of the Phoenician cities who had survived Alexander's campaign;[116] he appears to have been unsuccessful in maintaining his claim (though other city-kings in the region, in the Phoenician cities, for example, continued for some decades to hold their offices. Seleukos I's second wife, the Macedonian Stratonike (the daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes) who was later the wife of Seleukos' son Antiochos I, is said to have patronised the temple.[117] (His first wife, the Baktrian Apama, from

Central Asia, had the Greek god Apollo at Didyma – so the Macedonian lady patronised the Syrian goddess and the Baktrian lady the Greek god.)

Despite the Macedonian political overlay and Macedonian royal patronage, the temple and town retained a strong Syrian ambience. The name Hierapolis had to compete constantly with the Aramaic name Bambyke (which was in fact a corruption of the original Aramaic Mabbog), and in the Roman period this, in the form of the Syriac Membij, overrode and shed the Macedonian name; that name had fallen into disuse before the fourth century AD. That is, the temple and its devotees preserved the Syrian form and language and rites all through the Hellenistic period and into the Roman; probably little changed in essence.[118] The extent of the Hellenisation of the cult is subject to disagreement, but it cannot have been much more than superficial; the reversion to the Syrian city name rather suggests that Romanisation was just as ineffective.[119] To Greeks and Romans, therefore, the cult of Atargatis was particularly exotic, and their imaginations busily elaborated on its conduct and meaning, as Lucian's essay clearly demonstrated. It will have had a strong attraction for those susceptible to the exotic and erotic, and particularly to women. Atargatis in one of her guises was the goddess of childbirth, the moment in her life when a woman was in the greatest danger; anything to console women for such suffering would be welcome. In other guises she was the goddess of fertility, with appropriate erotic rites, and holding ears of corn. She sat on a lion throne, and was mistress of the beasts. She was, that is to say, effectively the great goddess, encompassing many powers. When exported into the rest of the Roman Empire she also took on a variety of names, of which Atargatis and *Dea Syra* (the Syrian goddess) were the most common. Even in Syria she had a number of different names, including Astarte and Decreto (at Ascalon and in Phoenicia). The various names used in the empire outside Syria will have clearly reflected this variety at home.

Greece and Macedon

The dating of the inscriptional evidence for the presence of the goddess in any one place ranges from the precise to the difficult to the impossible. One of the earliest records from outside Syria, is from Phistyon in Greece, where Aphrodite Syriae is involved in guaranteeing the validity of slave manumissions in the first century BC.[120] That is, the goddess was also protecting slaves and overseeing their liberation. She is repeatedly invoked over the next four centuries in Greece in the same role, at Beroia in Macedon in AD 239,[121] and at Peiraios in the first century BC[122] and at Astypalaea in the third century BC.[123] The region is also the source of two dedications made by women, by Aristomache, daughter of Phaenostratus at Chalkis in Euboia,[124] and by Malela daughter of Menandros in Macedon,[125] both to *Dea Syra.* At Kyrrhos in Macedon in 206 an inscription refers to a sanctuary of *Thea Syria Parthenos*,[126] a nomenclature which suggests the wide-ranging attributes of the goddess; she is also *Parthenos* in an inscription from Beroia, but also *Atargatis Soteira* in 239.[127] Pausanias in the second century AD refers to a 'Syrian temple' at Aegeira in Achaia.[128]

There is a curious item from Smyrna in Asia Minor, a public notice forbidding the taking of the holy fish. For some reason this has been taken to refer to the holy fish of Atargatis, who protected some fish in artificial ponds in some places in north Syrian and Mesopotamia – Edessa was one such place, where the custom survives to this day – though there is no obvious connection with the goddess other than the fish.[129] Similarly many of the Greek references to Aphrodite are taken to actually refer to Atargatis in her role as a fertility goddess. But it is difficult to see why the Greeks should confuse the two. The presence of Atargatis as the Syrian goddess was worshipped widely enough in Greece for the inhabitants to be able to distinguish her from Aphrodite without difficulty.

The most notable case in this connection is that of the sanctuary of Atargatis at Delos, where eighty decipherable inscriptions have yielded only fifteen in which Atargatis is named; the other examples involved different goddesses, notably Aphrodite. One must wonder if this means that Atargatis was being identified with Aphrodite, but it is obvious that Aphrodite was the element which was being addressed in the inscriptions – Delos was therefore host to the worship of Atargatis from about 150 BC, but her temple was also seen as a suitable place to address Aphrodite.[130] These several instances show that the cult of the Syrian goddess was certainly widespread in old Greece, from the Peloponnese to Macedon, and from the Hellenistic period through into the time of the Roman Empire. The cult is not just evidenced in inscriptions but in written texts and buildings as well.

Italy and Sicily

It may be from Greece that the cult went to Italy, though it seems more likely that it arrived there by sea direct from Syria. At Brundisium in southwest Italy, L. Pacilius Turus was the priest of both Kybele and *Dea Syra* at the end of the first century AD; nearby, at Egnazia, Flavia Recepta was the priestess of both Magna Mater and *Dea Syra*.[131] These are isolated instances in Italy, well away from the other examples (but near Greece, hence my earlier speculation that there was a connection back to Greece – both examples are in Magna Graecia, of course; the pairing of goddesses is, also, of course, reminiscent of the pairing of Aphrodite and Atargatis at Delos.[132]) The joint worship of a Syrian and an Anatolian goddess in each of these cases is not too startling, since both probably traced back historically to Hittite originals. It is more unusual that Flavia Recepta's inscription indicates that she had installed a statue of Attis, another Syrian deity, but male. She was clearly eclectic in her religious tastes with a preference for the eastern and the mysterious. Two priests might also imply two temples, but there is no other evidence for that in either case.

The two main centres of the worship of *Dea Syra* in Italy were Puteoli and, of course, Rome. Puteoli's main importance was as one of the main ports for importing food supplies for Rome, and so it attracted merchants, and goods, from many parts of the empire such as the men from Berytus who put up the temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, discussed in the previous section. In December 134

Hosidia Afra offered a plaque-dedication to Thalame, a Syrian name for the goddess Atargatis, perhaps part of her attributes, along with the priest T. Claudius Felix. This shows that an established cult of the goddess already existed in the town by that date, with a priest and probably a temple – and women participants; it was linked (again) with the worship of Venus Caelestis – who was a Latin version of the Carthaginian Tanith – through the person of that priest. This was therefore joint worship of two Semitic goddesses. Another dedication was on, or of, a small column, to *Dea Syria.*[133] Elsewhere in Italy there is one inscription concerning Atargatis, from Amiternum.[134]

A single inscription from Syracuse in Sicily records a group of men, Romans and Greeks, forming an association for the worship of the goddess, so providing evidence of the cult of Atargatis in that city, with a priest and two *praeses* administering the cult.[135] The presence of this cult in Sicily is not at all surprising; it was a mainly Greek island, at least in culture, but it had been the involuntary destination for thousands of Syrians who had been enslaved during the Seleukid wars in the second century BC, and the accompanying pirate raids. When the slaves rebelled they elected their leader as king, and he took the name Tryphon after the Seleukid revolutionary king of the 140s. The appearance of the Syrian goddess, one of whose functions and activities was to oversee and guarantee the manumission of slaves, is thus only to be expected. The names listed on the stone, however, indicate that her cult became well established among the Syracusan gentry and was patronised by Roman citizens and Greeks together; it had clearly migrated up the social scale from the slaves to the middle class; participation of the two population groups may also indicate that the goddess' influence existed to integrate possibly antagonistic parts of the population.

Rome was inevitably another place at which a temple to the goddess was founded. Probably, like the temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, it was on the Janiculum. The goddess merited a monumental statue presented by three members of the Veturius family. She is depicted more as a Roman matron than as an exotic Syrian, holding and surrounded by the same items as in the main cult statue as described by Lucian at Hierapolis, but these are subtly Romanised. She holds a mirror and a spindle, but is seated on a throne flanked by small lions (about the size of domestic cats), and crowned with a crescent moon.[136] The exotic, non-Roman elements are less than obvious, and it may be noted also that Hadad, her Syrian consort, has been dropped in these imperial references. Even in the earlier Greek Hellenistic cases such as Delos he had become barely visible, though he was often still present. Seven other inscriptions or depictions are known from various parts of the city. Her cult was one of the last the Emperor Nero claimed to believe in, though he discarded even her as well in the end.[137]

The Balkans

The distribution of examples of the goddess' cult outside Syria is oddly patchy. There are, as noted, some early (Hellenistic) examples in Greece (and Sicily) and a very restricted distribution in Italy; otherwise most of the records are from

the Balkan provinces, with only two places in the west of the empire producing anything at all. Moving north from Greece, which may well be how the cult spread into the Balkans, there is evidence in an inscribed marble plaque of a temple of *Dea Syra* at Scupi (Skopje) in southern Moesia Superior, just north of the Macedonian border, set up by the quaestor of the *cohors* II *Flavia Felix Dardanorum*. Though his name and the date are missing there is no indication of any Syrian connection except for the dedication to *Dea Syra*. Another inscription concerning the goddess is by an Aurelius (and so probably of the third century) and is also from Scupi.[138]

There are a series of references to the goddess along the western coast of the Black Sea. At Bizone in Moesia Inferior an inscription on a marble slab names the goddess and the dedicator Papas;[139] at Tomis, also in Moesia Inferior, Sosippos son of Kallikrates, from Sidon in Phoenicia, made a dedication to *Thea* Syria sometime in the second or third century;[140] at Olbia on the north coast, technically perhaps outside the empire, a dedication was made to Aphrodite Syriae, but both the name of the originator and the date are unknown.[141] Inland, at Philippopolis in Thrace, Beithos son of Kolyos set up an altar with an inscribed dedication to *Dea Syra* and another in the shrine of Apollo Cendyoneus.[142]

Dacia, as would be expected with the strong Syrian military presence there, has produced a series of half a dozen inscriptions and dedications to the goddess, at Romula, Apulum, Porolissum, and Zutor.[143] This makes eleven dedications in the Balkan provinces, which, with those in Macedonia and Greece, marks this as an unusually dense concentration, though still well spread, even thinly, geographically. To these may perhaps be added an epitaph at Aquincum in Pannonia Inferior where a *conductor* C. Iulius Sextius was commemorated by two of his colleagues, with *Dea Syra* mentioned on the stone.[144]

The west

In contrast to this considerable accumulation in Greece and the Balkans, the western provinces have produced evidence for only two sites where the goddess was worshipped. (A mosaic at Carthago Nova in Spain includes the goddess amongst a group of deities, but this is unlikely to be a mark of devotion and more an indication of an exotic goddess as part of a decorative element in a house; it may be disregarded as evidence of cult.[145]) The *cohors* I *Hamiorum* at Carvoran on Hadrian's Wall in Britannia has left two records, an altar and an inscribed panel, both referring to *Dea Syra*: in 163–166 the prefect of the regiment Licinius Clemens set up an altar to the goddess, probably very soon after the cohort had returned to the fort after the abandonment of its posting to the Antonine Wall;[146] several decades later in the time of the Severan emperors, another prefect, M. Crescentius Domitianus, set up a panel which was inscribed with a dedication to the Empress Julia Domna, in which he refers, quite appropriately in the context, to *Dea Syria*.[147] To these may be added an altar to the goddess set up by a *beneficarius* (whose name is damaged) at Cataractonium, also in Britannia.[148]

Summary

The spread of the worship of *Dea Syra* had begun in the Hellenistic period, no doubt as a result of Greek familiarity with the Hierapolis temple, and perhaps because of Seleukid royal patronage. The transportation of Syrians into the western Mediterranean as slaves also saw the transport of Atargatis there. The cult remained confined to Greek-speaking regions (Greece and Sicily) until the Roman imperial period, when it was infiltrated to Rome and Puteoli, probably by Syrian merchants. To some extent her worship was adopted by soldiers (in Dacia and Britannia, for example), but it seems to have been mainly confined to those with a direct Syrian connection: large areas of the empire remained outside her range. There is no evidence for Atargatis in Gaul, Germany, much of Italy, Spain, or North Africa, and only a little in Britain.

The goddess' worship was associated very much with both Syria and slaves' manumissions, and it may have been these two elements which restricted her appeal. She also evidently, and hardly surprisingly, appealed strongly to women. In addition, as Lucian's account suggests, her rites were really too exotic, even nasty, for high-Roman tastes, though this very exoticism was probably an attraction for those of less refinement. It is very noticeable that as her worship was adopted in Greece and the Balkans and Italy, her attributes became much less Syrian and much more acceptable to 'western' (that is, both Roman and Greek) tastes. The goddess clearly did not travel all that well, at least in her complete Syrian form; those in Greece who linked her, or confused her, or amalgamated her with Aphrodite clearly had a point.

V. Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus

The quantity of records concerning the presence of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus in the Roman Empire outside Syria is roughly comparable to the total quantity of the records of all the other Syrian deities put together. There is scarcely a province where the god was not worshipped, and at Rome he had a major establishment of priests and administrators and temples such as no other Syrian god or goddess had. Jupiter Dolichenus was clearly fully welcomed into the religious system of the empire, and had a large number of worshippers. The only comparison might be with the worship of Mithras – though Dolichenus was more widespread – or, eventually, Christianity.

Syria

Doliche was already the site of a minor temple when the Macedonian conquest took place. It was no more than a local sanctuary, with its deeper origins amongst the Hittite kingdoms of the Bronze Age and the neo-Hittite states of the Iron Age in the same way as Atargatis at Bambyke not far away. In this, of course, the deity and temple were typical of the centuries-old religious system in Syria generally, as it still was when the land was seized by the Greek and Macedonian conquerors.

Examinations of the distribution of the reliefs and *stelai* put up by the god's worshippers implies that there was a region of about fifty kilometres around the temple within which devotees to that temple could be found.[149] This survey only considered the territory of the modern Syrian republic, but the reach of the temple to the south was clear enough – from the Euphrates at Hamman, just south of the junction with the Sajur River, to the eastern side of the Amanus Mountains, and as far south as Halab (Aleppo) and the northern edge of the Syrian Desert. Assuming that this range is replicated in the north, as is suggested in the publication of several other *stelai* in a report on excavations at Doliche,[150] the temple's region of influence, as marked by the occurrence of images of the god, covered virtually all north Syria between the Syrian Desert, the Euphrates, and the Amanus and Taurus Mountains. It does not seem to have been present in middle Syria or Palestine – in this the god of Doliche was, of course, a contrast with the much wider presence in Syria of his neighbour Atargatis of Bambyke, or of Hadad in all Syria – but then Hadad was also Jupiter and it was only in the Hellenistic period that the idea of a specific manifestation of Zeus/Jupiter at Doliche emerged.

The reliefs are generally carved in a style first designed in the Iron Age, showing a male figure wearing a gown and trousers, carrying a two-handed axe, and standing on an animal which seems to be a bull. There are, of course, similarities in this to the attributes of Mithras. The god was quite clearly a weather or thunder god, and a warrior god, and had affinities with the Hittite weather god Teshub.[151] That is to say, the god of Doliche was the local version of the widespread sky god of the whole ancient Middle East (as were Zeus and Yahweh, of course).

The temple of the Persian and earlier periods, and the Hellenistic, has not been found, though recent excavations have finally located the site of the Roman temple, and it was probably on the same site. There, at Tell Duluk just north of Gaziantep, a cemetery of the Persian period was excavated before the Great War,[152] and this was large enough to imply that there was a reasonably sized settlement, perhaps a town, at the site at the time of the Macedonian conquest. Many of those buried in the cemetery were Iranian soldiers, which would mean that the god's warrior attributes were no doubt both recognised and enhanced, and this could have persuaded Alexander and his Macedonian successors that this was a suitable place for a garrison.[153]

What the Macedonians saw as they passed by in 331, therefore, was a temple with an associated town or village, probably lightly fortified, in which there was, or perhaps had been by then, a Persian garrison. The temple stood on top of a hill from which it had views for a considerable distance all round; also, on such a site the temple itself would be visible to all the surrounding country, as it is from the centre of Gaziantep. The site of the temple is roughly where the tomb of a local saint, 'Duluk Baba', is placed. A collection of seals from the area has reached the Karaman Museum, implying that the town was a community with some mercantile activity between the seventh and the fourth century BC.[154]

The original name of the place used by the local people at the time of Alexander's conquest is not known, but quite possibly it was something similar to the modern 'Duluk'. The Macedonians gave it the name Doliche, taking the

name from a place in their homeland, perhaps alliteratively, which was the site of another temple of Zeus on a hill. The Syrian site, with a fortification, a former garrison, a small town, a temple, and a name reminiscent of a Macedonian temple-town, was therefore a very likely place for a Macedonian garrison to be established during the wars which followed the death of Alexander. It is one of a series of places which received Macedonian names which are scattered throughout Syria (and farther east), probably awarded by the soldiers stationed in the garrisons.[155] (It is, of course, equally possible that Duluk is a name which is descended from Doliche, which would mean that we do not know the original Aramaic name.)

The place became a minor Macedonian city when Seleukos I organised north Syria as a set of a dozen cities after he acquired the rule over the region in 300 BC. It was flanked by Cyrrhus to the southwest and Nicopolis to the west, by Beroia (Aleppo) to the south, and by Hierapolis and Zeugma on the Euphrates the southeast and east.[156] Doliche itself was the most northerly Macedonian city in north Syria: to its north was Commagene, a sub-province, barren and thinly populated at the time, which occupied the long valley of the Euphrates where the river cuts through the Taurus Mountains.

So far as we can tell, neither the temple nor the city was much involved in affairs during the Hellenistic period, though building did apparently take place.[157] The temple evidently continued to operate and was adapted to the new Hellenistic architectural style, though the cult evidently remained in Syrian hands (as did that at Hierapolis, only 100 kilometres away). It made no obvious impression outside its home city, at least on the Greco-Macedonian populations, though it presumably became the local temple for the citizens, as it had always been, and no doubt the local Aramaic-speaking Syrians continued to offer their devotions alongside their Greco-Macedonian masters.

This changed when the Romans seized Syria. For the Seleukids north Syria had been the centre of their empire, and it was the last of their territories which the family had held. For Rome, by contrast, it was a border country, a frontier against a series of surrounding enemies and problems: the Jews and Emesa and the Ituraeans to the south, Commagene and the Armenian kingdoms to the north, the Parthians to the east. The garrison in north Syria had to be superior to these potential enemies, and above all to the long series of local Syrian kingdoms, technically part of the Roman Empire, whose territories ranged from single villages to whole provinces. It had also to be able to confront or deter the potentially great power of the Parthians; and it had to be strong enough to overawe the local population, many elements of which, particularly, but not only, the Aramaic-speaking people, were inimical to Roman rule. Syria was therefore heavily garrisoned from the time of Augustus, with four legions and the associated auxiliary regiments. One of these legions was stationed at Cyrrhus, near to Doliche.[158] It may be that, as a temple patronised by the local 'native' population, the temple was regarded as a potential focus of opposition. The stationing of a legion close by might thus be one of the responses by the Roman high command to the multiple problems of controlling Syria; it was also, of course, close to the Commagenean boundary.

In fact, for a time the city-and-temple was within the Commagenean kingdom. In the confused decades during and following the Seleukid collapse, the governors of Commagene had gradually detached their territory from the parent kingdom and had made themselves into kings, based at their great fortified hill city of Samosata; this became one of the client kingdoms which were half-incorporated into Rome's empire. When the Romans arrived they found that the kings had taken advantage of the Seleukid collapse and had expanded their authority to the south, gaining control of Seleukeia-Zeugma, the main Euphrates crossing point, and Doliche. Hence the positioning of the legion at Cyrrhus, which was placed precisely where it could threaten Commagene if necessary; it was also some distance away from the Parthian frontier, and so posed no apparent immediate threat to that empire, yet was close enough to imply the ability to conduct an active defence in the event of a Parthian (or a Commagenean) attack.

This arrangement, of concentrating on the possible threats of the local kingdoms, did not last, of course, since it soon became obvious that the real problem in Syria was the perceived threat from Parthia; in 40–37 a Parthian army had invaded and conquered Syria and lunged into Asia Minor, and had been driven out only after a long and serious war. Augustus' success in arranging a peace with Parthia in 20 BC was accompanied by the removal of Commagenean authority from its two recently annexed cities.[159] It was far too dangerous for a minor kingdom, which even appeared pro-Parthian at times, to be left in control of the Euphrates crossing at Zeugma, since, as in 40 BC, once an invader was across the river all north Syria, even Asia Minor and Palestine, and possibly Egypt, was open to the invader. One of the four legions was now placed at Zeugma, to hold the crossing. (For the movements and stations of the legions see Chapter 5, Part I).

Doliche therefore became a familiar place to Roman soldiers. It lay between the two legionary bases at Zeugma and Cyrrhus, and on the road which ran between them and then on eastwards into Parthia or westwards to Antioch and the Mediterranean. The legions in Syria notoriously remained in place for many decades, recruiting their replacements locally, and the cities were garrisoned by legionary detachments, and probably by auxiliary regiments. It was perhaps inevitable that the soldiers should adopt a local god, a thunder god who carried an axe and was clearly a warrior, as their personal devotion. Any soldier travelling between Antioch and the Euphrates would probably pass through Doliche and rest there overnight. The temple was, if not founded in the early Roman period, then clearly largely rebuilt then, which would indicate a renewed period of prosperity, and perhaps of official favour. There is still evidently much to do at the site to elucidate its history, and archaeological work continues;[160] we may reasonably assume, however, an increasing patronage by, and regard for, the temple, among the Roman garrisons in Syria.

The initial expansion

The problem then arises to investigate how, if these Roman soldiers were largely static, the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus spread to other parts of the empire.

And, as a subsidiary to this, when did the Syrian legions take up that worship? To that second issue it is difficult to find an answer except one linked to the answer to the first. There is simply no information from Syria on the early Roman period. So one needs to work backwards from the evidence from the rest of the empire, where a large number of inscriptions concerning Jupiter Dolichenus carry a clear date.[161] The earliest clearly dated example is of AD 125/126.[162] As it happens, this first certain date is on an inscription from the military base of the III *Augusta* legion at Lambaesis, dated to a couple of years before the Emperor Hadrian's visit to Africa. From then on the frequency of dated examples increases, if only slowly, with an example from Pannonia Superior dated between 128 and 138, two from Rome of 150, and several more from various places in the reigns of Antoninus Pius (138–161) and Marcus Aurelius (161–180).[163]

There is one more item to be considered among these very early inscriptions. At Egeta in Moesia Superior members of the *cohors* I *Cretum* set up an altar and an inscribed bronze tablet in their Dolichenum. This building also contained a great assemblage of other items, apparently the equipment for sacrifice, as well as various inscribed stones installed by worshippers. The building and its contents lasted into the third century, but its origin has been dated to the 'first [century] or the first half of the second century' by its excavator in estimating its original construction. The *cohors* I *Cretum* had certainly been at that camp at least since the early part of the first century AD, and remained there until at least AD 160, according to a long series of military diplomas from the province; there is no sign that the unit was ever moved elsewhere, even temporarily, though it may have been on campaign at times, and in particular it may have been used in the Dacian wars; there is no indication that it had any Syrian connections. The camp was sited in a particularly strategic location, and the fort which the unit occupied controlled part of the route along the southern bank of the Danube from the west. This route it was necessary for the Romans to keep blocked, even when they controlled both sides of the river, so it is likely that the unit remained in place more or less permanently.[164] It is for this reason that the fort continued in occupation even after Dacia to the north had been conquered. None of the inscriptions from this Dolichenum is dated.[165]

It is unlikely that the Egeta Dolichenum was established as early as the first century, for this would make it extremely anomalous; the later first century is just a possibility, but the first half of the second century is a much stronger probability, if the excavator's dating is roughly correct. It is in fact already unusual in that it was circular in plan, and smaller than other Dolichenums; indeed it seems to have been built rather on the pattern of one of the local peasant houses. The dating would anyway make the building one of the earliest of the type, before the normal rectangular shape for a Dolichenum had been settled on; it was perhaps more or less contemporaneous with, though maybe still earlier than, the Dolichenums which existed farther along the Danube at Carnuntum, and that at Lambaesis in Africa, which received the inscription by Sex. Iulius Maior of 126. The overriding anomaly therefore is its plan and construction, not its improbably early date, and this would suggest an early origin, sometime in the first half

of the second century: this, of course, is a time when Syrian regiments were coming into the area and being used in the Dacian wars. Again this was the next fort downriver from the Drobeta bridge which was garrisoned by Syrian *auxilia*; the adoption by a group of Cretans of the worship of Dolichenus may thus be explained by these elements; and the time after the Dacian wars fits with the vague date for the Dolichenum given by its excavator. The unusual circular plan of the building can be explained by assuming that the Cretan soldiers had heard of the idea of a Dolichenum but that a standard shape had not yet emerged.

It will be seen that the date of the earliest worship of Dolichenus outside Syria is a difficult problem; it relies on interpreting the dating of inscriptions above all. There are, of course, large numbers of inscriptions which do not bear a date or which can be dated only by a vague estimate based on style, perhaps to a half-century, or even less precisely – such as the building at Egeta just discussed. Some of these could well be of Hadrian's reign, though it seems unlikely that there were any which were earlier than that, for the obvious source of the new popularity of Jupiter Dolichenus is the experience of many soldiers from outside Syria who served in that country during Trajan's Parthian War (114–117). There is, however, thanks to the dearth of earlier and dated inscriptions, no direct evidence to connect that war and the spread of Dolichenus' devotion.

In the case of the earliest securely dated inscription, that of 125/126 at Lambaesis in Africa, it is noticeable that this was a temple dedicated by the governor of Numidia, Sex. Iulius Maior.[166] He was a native of Lycia in Asia Minor, but was not apparently acquainted, yet, with Syria (though he was to govern there much later). This may have been the earliest such record, but the fact that he was dedicating a temple to Dolichenus and not merely recording his attitude or leaving a single inscription does suggest that he was a worshipper before he arrived, and that there were a distinct group of devotees in the city and camp when he got there. How involved Maior was in the worship it is not possible to say – he dedicated another temple, but not of Dolichenus, elsewhere in Africa during his governorship,[167] so maybe he was only lending his name and prestige to the new temple at its dedication.[168] However, it cannot be denied that the construction of a temple implies the presence and participation of a considerable body of men who were willing to subscribe to the cost of the temple's construction; it is therefore not surprising that such groups probably also existed elsewhere by that time – in Moesia Superior, Pannonia Superior, and Rome, at the very least.[169] We may say, therefore, that the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus was firmly established in Lambaesis by the time of Maior's time as legionary commander and governor.

In this connection it is worth noting that the next dated example, from Carnuntum in Pannonia Superior, headquarters of the legion XIV *Gemina*, is dated to between 128 and 138, still in the reign of Hadrian, and virtually contemporary with the Lambaesis inscription; it is an inscribed stone block which was probably the foundation stone of the Dolichenum in the camp (as at Lambaesis). No person is named, but a *beneficarius* of the legion had a votive inscription for the god set up at Praetorio Latobicorum (Drnovo) in southwestern Pannonia Superior on the road to Italy, in 138.[170] This appears to confirm the popularity of the god

in that legion – though once again there is no obvious connection with Syria, unless a vexillation of the legion fought in Trajan's Parthian War. However, the dating of the two inscriptions, one of them at least ten years after the war had ended, and twenty years after in the case of the *beneficarius*' inscription, is really too distant to be accepted as evidence of any direct connection back to Syria and the Parthian War, unless we are to postulate a quiet growth of devotion among the ordinary soldiers over that time, inherently both unlikely – most of these early records are by officers of one sort or another – and unrecorded. Nevertheless, we have to accept, as in Africa, that a group of devotees presumably existed in Carnuntum well before the end of Hadrian's reign. The one connection between all three of these first instances – Egeta, Lambaesis, Carnuntum – must be Trajan's wars, but not necessarily the Parthian War. The arrival of Syrian regiments in all three regions, as for his Dacian war, for example, is more likely to be the basic cause of the new worship. There is no other possible way of linking three such geographically separate instances, given the absence of evidence of any direct link back to Syria and the home temple. (But see also the section on 'priests' later in the chapter).

It is just after this time, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, that the first definitive notice appears of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus at Rome. This is precisely dated to 150, and originates with Q. Domitius Philumenus and the *Collegium Heraclis*, of which he was a member, and is said to have come from the Dolichenum on the Aventine.[171] This means that the building, and therefore a group of worshippers, already existed by that time. The organisation of its worship had become much more elaborate by the end of the reign of Commodus. By then there was a series of grades of worshippers, with the priests apparently outranked by a set of 'patrons', who were socially of greater clout, and therefore influence, than the priests; they addressed each other as 'brother', but they also clearly outranked mere worshippers. The temple had, in other words, become socially fashionable amongst a probably fairly restricted group by that time, so much so that the patrons had their names (and their ranks in the hierarchy) inscribed permanently.[172] Given the date of Philomenus' inscription the group had evidently formed some years before 150, in which connection it may be noted that Sex. Iulius Maior was consul soon after his governorship of Numidia (in 126), and that his presence in Rome at various times during Hadrian's reign may have contributed to the spread of Dolichenus worship (he was active until 151/152 at least). It was a generation or more later than the original founding that the elaboration of ranks and functions had emerged. The reason for this elaboration must be that the group was made up of Romans, living in that class-ridden city, and that they were numerous enough to subdivide in the way the inscription shows.

The fundamental point about the origin of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus is that it began in Syria, and it is clear from later records that the god was widely adopted by soldiers; however, it is worth noting that both the military and the Syrian connections are distinctly weak in these earliest records. None of the earliest cases, not *cohors* I *Cretum*, Sex. Iulius Maior, the troops at Carnuntum,

nor the earliest worshippers at Rome, can be shown to have any obvious Syrian connections, and the Roman group shows no sign of any military links either – quite the reverse. The military connection clearly existed in the *beneficarius* and the legion XIV *Gemina* at Carnuntum, and with the *cohors* I *Cretum* at Egeta, and the Dolichenums at Carnuntum and Lambaesis were in military camps. But the records from Rome of AD 150 are purely civilian, so far as can be seen. Those who can be counted as worshippers throughout the history of the religion were only about 40% military, and these early records suggest that this was the case from the start.[173]

The Syrian connection, to repeat and to emphasise, in all these early cases remains wholly invisible: none of the names of the men involved were Syrian. There was certainly a Greek connection, with the Cretan regiment and with Philomelus (a Greek name) in Rome, while Sex. Iulius Maior came from Lycia in Asia Minor and may have been of Greek origin (or Lycian),[174] but there is no record of the worship of Dolichenus either in Crete or Lycia at this time (the first half of the second century), nor indeed later.

These earliest records, however, all indicate that a group of worshippers existed at all these sites by the time the inscriptions were made and the Dolichenums constructed. Therefore, there were groups of worshippers at Lambaesis before 125, in Pannonia before 138, and in Rome before 150. The scattered geographical nature of these indications surely implies that the god's presence was already widespread in the empire, at least in the eastern half. The building of Dolichenums – evident in all three places – implies a considerable concentration of resources among the worshippers – and therefore that the community had existed for some time. I would suggest that, however it happened, the spread of the worship of the god began from Syria among soldiers who had served there in the Parthian War in 114–117. The precise mechanism whereby the men at Lambaesis, Carnuntum, and Rome were evangelised is invisible, but no other explanation can be found.

Returning to Rome, there were other records inscribed and put up in other parts of the city. There was another Dolichenum on the Esquiline, in the camp of the *equites singulares*, whose worshippers were of a distinctly more military caste than those at the Aventine building, though not entirely, and they were from several units, including the city police (the *Vigiles*). Here it is, at last, possible to detect a link with Syria, since some at least of the *equites singulares* would have accompanied Trajan to Syria for his Parthian War, and the survivors would have returned to Rome with Hadrian. There was another temple on the Esquiline and other records are from the Lateran, the Caelian, and the Quirinal, though it is not clear if there were Dolichenums in those areas. Rome, however, was clearly a major centre for the worship of the god. There was a substantial body of worshippers, capable of supporting at least three temples, and possibly more. This is curious, since, if it was Jupiter who was the object of their devotion, there was already the great temple of Roman power on the Capitol for their attention. Therefore, since they were deliberately attached to Jupiter Dolichenus, it was evident that it was the Dolichenus-element which attracted these men. Possibly

Dolichenus was a more approachable version of the god; certainly the temple on the Aventine had a socially friendly clientele, if their collective description of themselves as 'brothers' is anything to go by, and probably this applied at the other Dolichenums in the city as well; that is, it was probably as much a social gathering as a religious one. The buildings were also probably more convenient to attend than a great temple on the Capitol. But it is also clear that other gods – Jupiter Heliopolitanus, for example – could have arranged the same brotherly feeling, and it is also attested for Mithras worshippers, though these had a much more rigid set of ranks. It may well be, therefore, that it was the god's Syrian origin which was the attraction.

Military and civilians

These initial appearances, before c.150, in Africa, Pannonia Superior, Moesia Superior, and at Rome, indicate that from the start the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus became established over a wide set of territories, and it was thus one of the major religions of the empire from the start. That beginning appears to have been in the early second century, probably in connection with both Trajan's wars and the posting of Syrian regiments into the rest of the empire. During the two-decade reign of Antoninus Pius there are, along with the records from Rome, other instances of dedications and commemorations which greatly widen its geographical range: in Ostia, in Asia Minor, in Britannia, in the Crimea, in Dacia, in Noricum, and in Raetia. Given that spread, it may be said quite certainly that this had very quickly – from the earliest record in Africa to that in Britannia was no more than forty years – become an empire-wide religion, and in the following decades the presence of the god's devotees only deepened and spread further. Gaul and Spain were two areas which saw few worshippers, but the northern frontier from Dacia to Britannia was well populated with them.

There are, however certain other gaps in the record, and some time delays. There is no record of any reference to Dolichenus in Egypt,[175] nor in Greece. There is only one example from Asia Minor (at Dorylaion, dated to 158[176]), or perhaps two, the second from Comana (to be considered later in this section). An example from (probably) Cappadocia shows a bull standing on a base, and was dedicated by a veteran of the legion XVI *Flavia Firma*, C. Valerius Valens. The legion was based at Satala in Cappadocia between 70 and 117, and then at Samosata in Commagene. Valens is more likely to have become a devotee in the legion's time at Samosata than at Satala, for Samosata was within the region from which the Doliche temple drew its traditional supporters; this is therefore not to be taken as an indication of the spread of the god's worship, but it is an example of a Roman soldier, probably from Italy, adopting the worship of a local god in the land to which he had been posted.[177] There are only half a dozen examples from Gaul and Hispania, and none for the western part of North Africa, Mauretania Tingitana (which is odd, given the considerable population of Syrian soldiers stationed there). The two Spanish records are both connected

with the legion VII *Gemina*, which was stationed permanently at the Villadecanos in the northwest of the peninsula.[178]

The Gallic examples, on the other hand, show no military influence at all: most of them are bronze offerings – casts of hands mainly – which suggest thank offerings for cures. This evidence of devotion turns up in some other places as well, for example at Comana in Cappadocia.[179] But Gallia has produced four of these hands, and two bronze statuettes of an apparently similar purpose. Geographically they are spread from Massalia north along the Rhone and Seine valleys as far as Amiens, close to the English Channel; if we could be certain of the connection of these bronze hands with Dolichenus, this distribution would be a clear indication of a route followed by devotees; however, it cannot be said that the connection is certain,[180] and other Gallic records relating to Dolichenus are equally ambiguous. From Marseilles harbour a statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus was dredged up in 1648; it has been suggested that it was lost in, or from, a sunken ship, and a connection with Gaul has been denied, but they had certainly arrived at Massalia before both sank.[181] Elsewhere at Ager Morinorum (Halinghem) on the English Channel, a statue base has been found.[182] Only one of all these Gallic and Spanish examples has a secure date, that from the camp at Villadecanos, of AD 224. (One inscription, from the col of the Alpine pass, is dated to 'after 15 BC', when the region was conquered by the Romans; almost any date over the next two or three centuries may be imagined.[183])

The bronze statuettes can be taken as evidence of devotion to the god, though their find spots do not seem to indicate anything in the way of a permanent building connected with the worship. The bronze hands are even less diagnostic. It is to be presumed that they were deposited in a temple, or at a shrine, giving thanks for whatever unpleasantness the devotee had escaped, or indeed for any good fortune he had experienced, but that is no guarantee of a permanent presence of either the dedicator or the worship of the god, any more than isolated statuettes would be. All that can be said is that their occurrence implies the presence at the find spot at the time of the presentation, of a devotee of Dolichenus. The geographical spread of the Gallic examples, along the Rhône Valley and towards the English Channel, does suggest that the depositors were more likely to be civilian merchants travelling with their goods, and so moving relatively slowly, than soldiers on the march – but no precise evidence is available on this.

There were, therefore, two types of worshippers, which may be termed, for convenience, military and civilian. The greatest attention has always been paid to the military examples, in part because the inscriptions by men of the Roman military have produced relatively copious records in the form of inscriptions, which are often relatively simple to decipher. But it is also evident that there was a separate group, as in Rome and perhaps in Gaul, and these were civilians, or at least men offering thanks. The separation might be thought to be symbolised by the separate Dolichenums in Rome, one in the *equites*' camp, the others in the 'civilian' areas of the city. Besides these examples, there are others in several other parts of the empire. Even in some provinces which are generally characterised as military, there are plentiful examples of civilian devotees leaving records

of their devotion. In Dalmatia, for example, none of those worshippers whose names are known can be classified as military men; in Pannonia Superior, even in the military area along the Danube, half of the records were apparently made by civilians; on the frontier in Germania Superior and Dacia there are several cases of civilian devotees. Away from the frontier, there are inevitably only a few military examples, in comparison with the larger number of those by civilians: there are none in Thrace, and few in Italy outside Rome and the fleet based at Misenum. The worship of Dolichenus spread into the civilian areas as quickly as it had to the military, but in all cases somewhat selectively.

So the worship of Dolichenus was not only a military phenomenon, though soldiers do feature most strongly in the records. This may well be because they were more liable than most to make a record of their religious intentions and affiliations in inscriptions (and they could also afford to), and that their camps have been both easy to identify and have received the attentions of many excavators. If the new Dolichenums were in cities other than Rome it is much less likely that they will have been found.

Nor is it the case that the worshippers were only men. Where more than occasional, or single, inscriptions appear, there is good evidence that women took part in the worship as well as men, and recorded the fact. At Lucus Felices in Noricum (Mauer an der Uhl, Bavaria), for instance, a treasure of devotional presentations has been found, and most of the items were clearly presented by women.[184] That such items have not been found elsewhere may best be explained by the assiduity of looters (on which see later in this section). Further, it is not an infrequent occurrence that a soldier associated his wife and children with him in dedications. And at Tergeste (Trieste) in Italy the only devotees recorded were two women.[185] So we may say that not only did the worship of Dolichenus spread rapidly to all parts of the empire, but it spread into the civilian regions as well, and to women as well as to men.

The great majority of soldiers whose names are recorded on inscriptions of various sorts were of officer status, if centurions can be allotted that rank: centurions, decurions, *beneficarii*, and prefects appear repeatedly in the records in every region where these have been found. In a number of cases also men of the highest rank below the imperial family were involved. The governor of Africa and commander of legion III *Augusta*, Sex. Iulius Maior, dedicated the new temple to Jupiter Dolichenus at Lambaesis in 125/126, as noted already,[186] but it may well be significant that the other dated records of governors or legionary commanders concerning Dolichenus came from the Severan period, when devotion to a Syrian god was clearly fashionable: L. Lucceius Martinus, governor of Germania Inferior, is recorded in the restoration of the temple at Colonia Agrippensium (Cologne) in 211, with the centurion Priscus of the XXX *Ulpia Victrix* legion presumably having supervised the actual work.[187] About the same date the *consularis* L. Marius Perpetuus is named on an altar at Karatas in Moesia Superior; he is probably the same man, described as governor of that province, whose name has disappeared from another altar set up at the same place a year or so later.[188]

These, however, are the only certain cases of men of consular rank,[189] men who therefore had been members of the Senate for some decades before their governorships, who had any Dolichenus connection. Further, no senators are recorded as involved with Jupiter Dolichenus at Rome itself, nor is any member of the imperial family of families.[190] No doubt their rank required such people to be conspicuously devoted to the official Roman religion while in the city, though in provincial office they could occasionally indulge in other gods, perhaps because Dolichenus was popular in a camp of the legion they were visiting. The failure of senators to carry that connection with Dolichenus back to Rome – so far as we know – rather suggests a less than fervent worship of the god, as already suggested in the case of Sex. Iulius Maior.

The later geographical expansion

The initial establishment of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus in Africa, Rome, and the Pannonia-Moesia region expanded decisively during the reign of Antoninus Pius, as already noted, and continued to do so during that of Marcus Aurelius. This expansion was by no means at a startling rate – forty years spread across the empire is in fact not all that rapid – but it was very geographically extensive. In the reign of Marcus' son Commodus, the expansion continued, and even given his relatively short reign, it seems to have speeded up. A survey of dated cases by reign shows very few in the reign of Antoninus Pius or Marcus (three and two respectively), but almost one per year during Commodus' reign (nine in twelve years), and well over one per year in Septimius Severus' reign (twenty-nine in nineteen years). And in that time the worship of this version of Jupiter spread into many of the provinces along the military frontier where it had not existed before Antoninus' reign. (Of course – and it is necessary to be reminded of this regularly – a majority of cases are undated; there are also ten examples which have been dated to the 'mid-second century', or to the 'second half of the second century', though their distribution generally mirrors the geographical spread of the dated examples.)

From 211 onwards, the incidence of dated inscriptions lessens. In the period of the later Severans (217–235) they occur at roughly one a year (twenty-seven in twenty-four years), but in the following two decades (235–255) the incidence is half that (twelve in twenty years). Some provinces have produced no inscriptions at all – Raetia, Dalmatia, Pannonia Superior – in this later period; and there are none from Italy either.

These statistics are of course only indicative, given the large number of inscriptions which cannot be dated or can only be dated vaguely, but the peak of production was clearly in the Severan period. The growth had, however, begun beforehand, in Commodus' reign, and it dwindled only relatively slowly in the reigns subsequent to Alexander Severus' murder. It does not therefore seem to be the case that the advent of the Severan dynasty with its Syrian connections was the 'cause' of the late-second-century increase, though it is probable that the presence of large Syrian contingent in the imperial palace may have helped.

However, if it is the case that the initial expansion of devotion to Dolichenus took place in part as a result of the activity of soldiers in Syria in Trajan's Parthian War, then it would be logical to assume that the Parthian Wars in Marcus' reign fuelled the expansion of devotion in his reign and Commodus', and that the Parthian War of Septimius' reign continued the process. In all these wars the Roman army's base was in north Syria, and every legion will have been able to become familiar with the temple at Doliche; by this time, it may be presumed that a substantial and notable building – and its very visible hilltop site – existed. There had been, as with the temple at Heliopolis/Baalbek, centuries of prosperity during which enormous quantities of buildings had been put up throughout the empire; an increasingly popular temple would undoubtedly benefit from such an attention, just as did that at Heliopolis. It is worth remarking, while on the subject, that the geographical situation of Dolichenus' home temple was particularly advantageous when compared with that of Heliopolitanus. Doliche was easily accessible to many soldiers both because the legions were stationed in north Syria and because during the Parthian Wars many of them would pass close by it. The temple of Atargatis/*Dea Syra* at Hierapolis/Bambyke might also be considered to have been particularly accessible for the same reason, but it is unlikely that soldiers would take very strongly to the worship of that exotic goddess.

There was another Parthian War under Caracalla, and still others under his successors, and yet the incidence of inscriptions declines in that period. So, although there seems to be an apparent chronological connection with the Parthian Wars (at least those which could be considered Roman victories), the connection is not set in stone, and other reasons for the rise and decline may be worth searching for. The changing willingness of people to record their devotion in stone inscriptions may well be as potent a factor for the reduction in the numbers of commemorations as was the confusion of the third century in its civil warfare, and perhaps a lesser willingness to lay out scarce resources in such a way.

A considerable number of inscriptions is dated, in the usual vague way, to the 'third century', but a dozen of these are suggested to be of the first half of that century, and these are fairly well spread through the provinces. There are also two inscriptions which have been dated to the second half of the third century, one in Africa and one from Noricum; a third, from Britain, has the firm date of 286.[191] (Another, from Ratiaria in Moesia Superior, has been dated to 300 in one study, but others who have commented on it are much less certain; however it does appear to be of the later third century at least.[192]) These late examples are anomalous if one accepts that the destruction of the home temple at Doliche in 252 or 260 caused the collapse of the worship in the rest of the empire.[193] On the other hand, there were other factors at work in the ending of the cult (discussed later in the chapter).

The worship of this god, therefore, spread into most of the frontier provinces during the second half of the second century, with particularly strong presences in Africa,[194] Pannonia Superior,[195] and Noricum,[196] Dacia,[197] and Germania Superior,[198] on Hadrian's Wall,[199] and in the Crimea.[200] The frontier from Carnuntum to Serviodunum in Raetia was especially well populated by devotees, as were the military areas in Dacia and Africa.

This geographical expansion was not repeated in the decades following the accession to power of Septimius Severus in 193, for by then most of the provinces already contained devotees, but the number of records certainly greatly increased; that is, the density of worship appears to have increased. Partly this may well be because the epigraphic habit now tended to include a clearer indication of the date of the record. The net result was that the number of records seems to increase, but the area in which Jupiter Dolichenus was worshipped remained much the same. The former gaps – Egypt, Spain, Mauretania Tingitana, Asia Minor, Germania Inferior, Gallia – remained largely devoid of his worship, whereas the northern frontier from Germania Superior to Moesia, and Africa, saw a clear thickening of the distribution of such records.

The spread of the presence of Dolichenus worship is the basis for the application of the modern theory of a 'network' of these instances.[201] It has to be said that, to me at least, this is quite unnecessary and unconvincing. A network surely requires evidence of continuous contact between its members over the time during which the network exists, and the modern networks, which do seem to exist, are speedy and yet have existed so far for only a short time. They rely on instantaneity and contemporaneity. The evidence for a network of Dolichenus worship ignores the time factor. The preceding sections of this study, particularly the section on the initial expansion and this one, demonstrate clearly enough that the expansion of the worship of Dolichenus was slow and without any obvious planning. Nor is there any real indication that contact between the various temples and Dolichenums and worshippers was maintained (though see the next section, on 'priests'). A network clearly must be active, with continuing contact between its elements, which must exist over a considerable period of time. As such, the evidence of the worship of Dolichenus fails. Most of the records are purely momentary, and cannot have been said to have existed at any time before or after their creation. This is not necessarily the case in every example, of course, as the discussion on the cases of Rome and Pannonia and Africa will have indicated, but in most cases an individual inscription is no more than that and devotion to the god at that place cannot be proved to have existed before the date of the inscription or after it. There are only two matters where a certain permanence in worship by what may be termed a congregation can be detected: the existence of priests (see the next section) and the existence of permanent buildings which have been interpreted as Dolichenums; both of these are very geographically and temporally restricted. It is, therefore, best to rely on the original material and not impose a modern theory, derived from modern conditions, upon it; and it is better to consider that original material, and if necessary allow a theory to develop from it. Times have changed.

Priests

One of the items which is especially prominent in many of the inscriptions (and the nearest thing to an actual Dolichenus network) consists of the several references to men acting as priests. These are not wholly coincident with the existence of known temples of Dolichenus, but there are enough which do

coincide to suggest that it was usual for priests to serve them, and that there are many temples which are still to be found. There are also some indicative geographical features to both of these items. And, at last, they provide a clear (or at least clearly arguable) link between the temple at Doliche and the worshippers in the rest of the empire.

There are, in fact, far more priests recorded than there are Dolichenums, and relatively few of both are recorded in the same places. But it seems only reasonable to assume that, if there was a Dolichenum, then there was in many cases a priest to serve it, and that the presence of a priest would presuppose the existence of a temple – though it is of course possible, even probable, that priests could serve the needs of worshippers without the need for a temple and that a Dolichenum could operate without a priest being present or active. Joint priest-and-temple records are known from Rome, Lambaesis in Africa, Carnuntum in Pannonia Superior, Porolissos in Dacia, and Troesmis in Moesia Inferior.[202] These are spread widely enough through the empire to suggest that the combination should be regarded as the norm. There are more of the buildings known than priests, but the former are obviously more durable than the latter, who might never have had their existence recorded on stone. It may be permissible, therefore, to assume that the evidence of priests and Dolichenums implies that the missing element in each is simply unrecorded or undiscovered. This will be discussed more statistically in the next section, but, in summary, the combination would put a priest and a Dolichenum in place in almost every province, and several provinces would have several.

Both priests and Dolichenums are, of course, evidence for Syria and Syrians influencing people in other parts of the empire, but it is the priests which are evidence of the most direct sort. The priests' origins can be identified by their characteristic names. Some of these are clearly Semitic in origin (usually beginning with 'Bar' – 'son of'), while others are clearly Greek. Since Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt, all lands where Greek names are to be expected, have produced little or no evidence of Jupiter Dolichenus worship, that leaves Syria as the source of the priests; those priests with Greek names may thus be considered to have come from Syria, or to have become priests as a result of receiving training in Syria. Some priests also had the bland Roman names which tend to conceal origins.

The densest concentration of priests was in the Balkans. In Moesia Inferior, priests called Barsemon and Damas are recorded at Troesmis, and another called Baronas at Sacidava;[203] others, with Greek names, and who thus probably came from Syria, included Polydeukes son of Theophilus at a site near Noviodunum, Aurelius Marinus Romanus at Troesmis (a name which included the probable Syrian element of Marinus), and another Marinus at Sacidava. There was a second Polydeukes, and Lucius D[oci]mus, at Durostorum, and Aurelius Antiochianus at Emporium Paralensis.[204] Of the nineteen priests named on Dolichenus inscriptions from this province, nine had Syrian or Greek names.[205] In its sister province of Moesia Superior seven priests are named, three of whom had Greek, or partly Greek, names – Victor son of Demetrius and Demetrius son of Ambibius at Gracinina not far from Viminacium (possibly father and

son), Aurelius Iulianus son of Iulius who stated that his origin was in the village of Cyrosina in the region of Cyrrhenis in Coele Syria (that is Cyrrhus, near to Doliche). Aurelius Bassus at Romulium might be Greek; three other priests at Ratiaria had Thracian names; these may well be considered to have received priestly training at Doliche.[206]

To the north, in the large province of Dacia, Flavius Barhadadi was priest at the Dolichenum at Apulum (Alba Iulia); he had a very obviously Syrian name. From the same place is the record of a priest called Antiochus, which, after two and a half centuries of Seleukid rule, had become a typically Syrian name; at Drobeta one of the two priests was Atennais (that is 'Athenaios'); at Ampelum the three priests named – Aurelius Marinus, Adde Barsemos, and Oceanus Socratis – all could be counted as Syrian; out of ten priests noted in Dacia, six were therefore evidently Syrians.[207]

In Thrace, at Cillae (Cerna Gora) four priests are named on a statue base, two called Castor, one Aquila (misspelled 'Axylas'), and one Polydeukes – the latter two of these names are Greco-Syrian. At Augusta Traiana, a short distance to the north, the priest was named Aurelius Sabinus Theophilus Syrus, a name which gradually opens up the man's origin, first as a Roman citizen (after 212), then as a Greek, and finally as a Syrian; he is also recorded in an inscription from Stamovo, some way to the east. Also from Augusta Traiana, an altar names two priests, Flavius and Heliodorus, the second evidently with another Greco-Syrian name.[208] In Dalmatia the cities and military bases at Narona and Salonae both had priests in their Dolichenums who came from Syria; at Narona there were two priests, called Flavius Faladas and Demetrius Apollinaris, and at Salonae the priest was called Aurelius Romanus Barhada; he associated his wife Syra with him on his epitaph. There was just one other priest in the province, this time without a Syrian name.[209]

Moving upstream along the Danube from Moesia into Pannonia Inferior, there were three priests recorded on a marble sculpture of Dolichenus at Acumincum, one of whom was called Apollinaris;[210] other priests at Lussonium and Sarpentele were either unnamed or had Latin names. In addition, there is Har[fua]r{i}enus Surus, named on a stele at Aquincum; he identified himself as from the land of 'Dolice', the village of Arfueris Silva, from which he evidently took his name (though the latter is considerably 'restored'). He is not identified as a priest, but neither was he apparently a soldier: his obvious function, if he was not merely a visitor, was as a priest sent out from the home temple.[211] In Pannonia Superior, Maronius Agathange[ ]lus was priest at Gerulata, certainly having a Greek name, and at Carnuntum two of the six priests were called Antiochus and Marinus. The scribe, Q. Gavius Zosimus, and one of the two curators, C. Iulius Dionicus, both had Greek *cognomina* also.[212] Elsewhere in the province three men serving as priests all separately identified themselves as Syrian: at Savaria, a man whose name is lost was *Surus ex civitate Seleukia Zeugma*, and two other men, Iulius Tulina and Aurelius Antipater, were probably Syrian, being identified as *[c]ive[s Surus]*, though this is clearly an uncertain assumption; at Brigetio a decurion called Domitius Titus was also from Seleukia Zeugma.[213] The scribe,

the curators, and the decurion were not identified as priests, but this is a curious concentration of men from that one region and that one city.

Along the rest of the northern frontier, from just west of Carnuntum in Pannonia to the western end of Hadrian's Wall in Britannia, there are only three more priests named: one at Celeia in Noricum, whose name is broken on the stone, one at Statio Vetonianis in Raetia ('Demettius' – probably 'Domitius', but 'Demetrius' is possible), and one at Mogontiacum in Germania Superior, where the priest was called Valens.[214] Just along the river at Rigomagus (Remagen) the priest Arcius Marinus put up an altar on behalf of the *cohors* I *Flavia*; his name marks him as probably a Syrian.[215] To complete the frontier areas, a pair of priests (with Latin names) are recorded at Ammaedara in Africa Proconsularis.[216]

Within the interior parts of the empire, only Italy had priests of Dolichenus. At Misenum, the headquarters of the western fleet, Antipater is noted as a priest on an inscription put up by a Syrian and his three sons; on another example from the same place a priest was named but the name is broken – it ended ' – ieotie', which is probably Greek.[217] Along the coast at Tarracina the priest was Marcus Barsemias, a clearly Syrian name, and in the east of Italy there were priests recorded at Cesena and Ariminum, both with full Latin names.

Finally, to Rome. The Aventine inscriptions record seven priests, one of whom, Aquila Barhadadus, was clearly a Syrian.[218] Of the others, Apollinaris, Chaibonis, Aurelius Antiochus, and M. Aurelius Hoiopionu Acarcius had Greek names, which in the context would suggest Syrian origins.[219] At the Esquiline Dolichenum two priests with eastern names are recorded: M. Ulpius Chresimus, who, according to one inscription, was a Parthian, and Chrysate Thyrsus.[220] There was also other priests, including an *eques Romanus*, with Latin names, and at the Aventine a scribe, Fonteius Eutyches, with a Greek name.[221] One inscription from Rome, but not assigned to a particular Dolichenum, mentions 'Atheneus' the priest.[222] It is evident that the majority of priests of the Dolichenums at Rome were of Greek origin, but except in the cases of Barhadadus and Chresimus, this is less than definitive, since the Greek and Greco-Syrian element in the Roman population was by the second century considerable,[223] and such priests could have come from the general Roman population.

Two major points emerge from this priestly catalogue. First, the majority of the priests of Dolichenus in most of the provinces where they have left records, were Greek or Syrian by name, and most of those were demonstrably Syrian rather than merely Greek; it seems safe to conclude that those with Greek names were in fact also by origin mostly Syrian. Second, the incidence of priests decreased rapidly towards the west, and there was only one who could be classified as Greek or Syrian west of the upper Danube, though it must be said that, except for a curious concentration in north Britannia, the general incidence of records of Dolichenus is thin in the west.

The exact purpose of the priests is never made clear, but it may be assumed that they conducted sacrifices or celebrations at the Dolichenums. If it may be assumed that where there were priests there was a Dolichenum, and where there was a Dolichenum there was probably a priest or priests to serve it, the number

of both priests and Dolichenums was considerably larger than the precise evidence indicates. At least one Dolichenum – at Carnuntum – had curators and a scribe as well, very much on the lines of the organisation detected with personnel charged with the same tasks in the temples at Rome and in the temples of other gods at Puteoli, if less elaborate and perhaps less socially self-conscious. That is, the worship of Dolichenus fitted comfortably into the normal type of temple system in the Roman world, or perhaps it would be best to describe the process as the worship of Dolichenus accepting the normal Roman temple system, a sort of domestication into the normal Roman social-religious atmosphere of an alien god.

The presence of priests who had come from, or had been sent from, Syria was not normal in Roman religious practice. There is no sign of such a practice with other Syrian religions – except Christianity, and here a particular geographical origin of priests was not mandatory. This was not a universal requirement for the worship of Dolichenus, at least from the evidence of the names recorded for the priests, notably in the west, where the absence of priests is almost universal, but it was clearly common in much of the eastern half of the empire. This must imply that the home temple at Doliche was appointing such men, perhaps as roving priests, perhaps by request of the devotees at any one particular place, or perhaps by direct appointment, either to specific places or to a province, such as those recording their Syrian birthplace – Seleukeia-Zeugma, Cyrrhus, Doliche, and so on. It would also imply that the Syrians who were given such appointments were trained in the necessary priestly and sacrificial techniques, and perhaps in the mysteries of the system. Whether these men were merely performing the requisite sacrifices or were evangelising as well we cannot tell, though the two functions may well be considered complementary. It may also be that the priests sent out 'into the field' may have been able to appoint, or train, or consecrate, new priests – such as those with Thracian names at Ratiaria – without them having to return to Doliche for that purpose. This would also help to account for those priests with Latin names.

This is a lot of speculative assumptions, but the evidence of the arrival of Syrians as priests (as with both curators and scribes) in much of the empire as far west as Italy and Raetia is certain, and needs to be explained. There are no obvious facts on which to base an explanation other than the presence of these priests, and since they were specifically priests their position was necessarily important to the worshippers. Socially, of course, they were unlikely to have been either important or prominent, as the lowly position of their names on inscriptions from Rome and elsewhere tends to suggest – and priesthood in Roman society was not, as these men would seem to have been, a profession, but more a civic honour; so their importance was only in the performance of the rites. Nevertheless, their presence would have done something to validate the worship both in the eyes of the members and those of observers.

The existence of a Dolichenus priesthood, which would appear to have been appointed by and trained at the home temple, raises the question of whether the worship of the god was promoted from, or controlled by, the home temple

at Doliche. The very largely Syrian names of the priests – either directly Syrian or in Greek guise – indicates that it was from Doliche itself that the priests were dispatched; several of them in fact came from the immediate area around Doliche, which is also the original region whose Iron Age inhabitants owed allegiance to the temple. It would thus seem to be a reasonable conclusion that the home temple did indeed exercise some control over the worship of the god outside the temple area.

This provides a clear contrast with the practices, so far as they can be discerned, with other Syrian religions. There is little sign of Jupiter Heliopolitanus or *Dea Syra* having this sort of system, or indeed any of the more established Greek and Roman religions. Most of the records of both of these deities show that the worship was organised by laymen, such as the merchants of Berytus who lived at Puteoli, or the soldiers at Carnuntum. Only in the great city of Rome can one discern anything in the nature of a priesthood for either of these, and this may be a function of the number of worshippers; elsewhere there is no sign of one. It follows that the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus was the only Syrian religion which could compete in organisational terms with Christianity. Christianity would seem not to have been controlled in any obvious way from a particular centre but its priests had to have some training and some validation. Mithraism may have had some sort of similar organisation, but it did not have a particular centre from which it could be organised.

One of the results of this more organised system was clearly the wider extent of Dolichenus worship than the other Syrian religions, and this may also imply some proselytism. It may be that this was one of the reasons why Dolichenus was popular amongst soldiers, though, as has been seen, it was not a religion which appealed entirely to soldiers, since a considerable number of women and plenty of non-soldiers partook of the worship. It was a religion, in other words, which appealed to large sections of the Roman population, not just to one sector. In this it contrasted with both Mithraism and Christianity, which must be seen as its main competitors. Mithraism appealed very largely to soldiers, Christianity very largely to civilians, particularly for a long time the poor; Dolichenus appealed to both, as well as linking in with the official Roman imperial religion. Indulging for a moment in speculation, once more, one wonders what might have happened had the Emperor Aurelian chosen to promote Dolichenus rather than the sun god in his attempted religious revolution. It seems clear that the sun god did not evoke a great deal of loyalty, perhaps tainted as it was by its Severan connection, and by memories of the antics of Elagabalus; Dolichenus was, by contrast, much more popular, had developed a fairly widespread organisation, and was, in contrast to Christianity, friendly towards the Roman state. By choosing Dolichenus over the sun god, Aurelian (or perhaps Diocletian) might well have cut the religious ground from under Christianity.

Dolichenums

The Dolichenums were the places of worship and sacrifice. Probably the earliest which has so far been excavated – most are inferred from references

in inscriptions, or merely from the existence of the inscriptions themselves rather than by excavation – is that at Egeta in Moesia Superior, the Dolichenum of *cohors* I *Cretum*. This is a roughly circular building, with benches around the interior wall.[224] The date is uncertain, but 'first century or first half of the second century' was suggested by the excavator, though, as pointed out earlier, this is extremely vague, and 'second century' seems more likely on other grounds, particularly sometime after the Roman conquest of Dacia. It is the only Dolichenum which was built on a circular plan, suggesting it may have been constructed by local people, whose homes were circular huts – the 'Cretans' may well have been mainly locally recruited by the time the Dolichenum was built. When excavated it contained a lavish selection of materials, statues, bronze items, and inscribed altars, but much of this was broken and scattered. Nothing of great value was found, which suggests either that it had been looted in antiquity – as the disordered contents might already suggest – or that it had never originally held much of intrinsic value. The suggested dating puts its construction before AD 150 at the latest, and it remained in use until at least the time of the Emperor Elagabalus, for an offering in his name was found inside.

In considering other examples, it is only possible to refer to those places where a physical building regarded as a Dolichenum has been located. If the presence of a priest may be taken as a sign of the existence of a Dolichenum, then the number of buildings rises substantially. There are eight Dolichenums recorded along with priests, and there are fourteen buildings interpreted as Dolichenums at places where no priest is known. But there are twenty-seven more places where priests are recorded, but where no known Dolichenum buildings have been found. Putting all these together would increase the number of Dolichenums to forty-nine. (This is ignoring those places where altars have been found, without other context, though it seems likely that most altars were placed inside Dolichenums, as at Egeta, or close to them, and so they might also be indicative of more such buildings.) There are also four other probable sites where there are strong indications that a Dolichenum existed; the treasures found at Mauer an der Uhl in Noricum and at Sorviodurum in Raetia were probably collected from local Dolichenum and hidden to foil looters, though the Dolichenums themselves have not been found.[225] In Italy at Ateste a 'college of veterans' is recorded, and at Brixia a 'candidatus' – perhaps an apprentice priest – and these records might presuppose a Dolichenum at each place.[226] This would increase the numbers of Dolichenums to over fifty, though this is clearly only a minimum.

The circular form is unique to Egeta, but not altogether surprising, for, rather like other oriental religions which were spreading through the empire, it was a socialising cult. The uniqueness of the building's plan suggests it was an early case – the establishment of such buildings always took the pattern later of square or rectangular buildings. There were benches ranged around the inner wall which were intended to be sat or lain on by the members, who, by analogy with the much wealthier and more splendid Dolichenum on the Aventine

in Rome, called each other 'brother'. This implied a social equality among the devotees which perhaps did not really exist in Rome outside the temple, but which probably did amongst the Cretan deportees at Egeta, where the circular building would certainly encourage egalitarianism, perhaps more than the lines of benches in other Dolichenums.

Other Dolichenums than Egeta's were rectangular in form, but they were also arranged so that the 'brothers' sat in equality: some of the buildings had the benches around the walls, as at Egeta; others were arranged in two facing lines of seats; the different arrangements were probably mainly the result of the architecture of the building – a long narrowish rectangle pointed to the idea of facing benches; a square building would suggest benches around the walls. In any case it is apparent that this was a religion which promoted brotherhood and equality among its members.

Twenty-two Dolichenums have been recognised in the empire, though some are doubtful and others are still being found. A temple on the Caelian in Rome regarded as a possible Dolichenum is not necessarily to be accepted, nor is one which had been suggested at Lepcis Magna in Tripolitania, at least not without better proofs; on the other hand, two 'new' ones have been excavated in the early years of the twenty-first century, one at Balaclava in the Crimea, the other at Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall – a pair of discoveries which greatly extended the religion's geographical and chronological range.[227] This would imply that more are very likely to be discovered in the future.

It has to be assumed that Dolichenums were established by groups of devotees. In many cases these were soldiers, but this apparent preponderance is only because the present evidence for Dolichenums largely comes from military camps. The evidence of inscriptions suggests that there must be other Dolichenums in civilian areas (as at Ateste and Brixia in Italy). In Rome, for example, the Esquiline temple was part of, or was attached to, the camp of the *equites singulares*, but the Aventine Dolichenum shows no real military connections except for one man who claimed the rank of *optio*, but was in fact an imperial freedman. None of the numerous men listed in the three patronal inscriptions from the Aventine temple seems to have been a soldier, nor were any of those named on its individual inscriptions. The same may be said of the devotees recorded in the rest of Italy; apart from some sailors at Misenum, many of the inscriptions name men and women with no apparent military connections – the veterans of Ateste being an exception.

Several of the Dolichenums were apparently not exclusively devoted to Jupiter Dolichenus. Inscriptions relating to Mithras, another god which was popular with the army, emerging this time out of eastern Anatolia, have been found in the temples at Egeta, Vindolanda, and Rome, and Diana, Serapis, and others are linked with Dolichenus in some places. This is a final point to be made: Jupiter Dolichenus was not an exclusive god, but, like Hadad and Zeus as he had been before becoming Jupiter, he was one of the numerous gods and spirits of the ancient Greco-Roman-Syrian world.

The end of Dolichenus worship

Michael P. Speidel suggested in his study of Dolichenus worship that it was the destruction of the home temple at Doliche by the invading Sassanid Persians in 252 or 253, or (again) in 260, which sabotaged belief in the efficacy of the Jupiter from Doliche among its worshippers. He pointed above all to the coincidence in time of the end of that temple and the cessation of inscriptions dated after 260 in the rest of the empire.[228]

There are just two things wrong with this thesis: it is not clear that the Doliche temple was ever destroyed by the Persian invasions, and the production of dated inscriptions concerning Dolichenus in the Roman Empire did not cease in 260, but continued for at least another thirty years, and perhaps longer. The sources for the wars in Syria in the 250s are not good, though in one Persian inscription Doliche is listed, in words attributed to the Persian king Shapur, along with a long series of other cities, as having been captured – the date is either 252 or perhaps 256.[229] Destruction may have happened at the city and at the temple, or it may not have; it is certain that much damage was caused at Antioch, both then and in the later invasion of 259–260,[230] and it is assumed by modern authors that if Antioch was hurt so must all the other cities which the invaders captured have been. But Antioch was a particular prize for an invader, and its capture and sack would clearly have a much greater political effect than any other city; that is, other cities were not prime targets.

The Sassanids were certainly avid Zoroastrians, and may have taken against a rich and famous pagan temple, but again, there is no record of this. In their later invasion in 260, no mention of Doliche is made in Shapur's list of conquests, though the sack of Antioch resounded through the east for decades. Christian authors were unpleasantly gleeful at the event, and at the capture of the Emperor Valerian. Shapur did record transporting large numbers of Syrian captives into his empire, and it seems reasonable to conclude that people from Doliche were among them.[231] This might well be a decisive event in the devastation of the city and the temple – but there is no direct evidence that this happened, and no explicit testimony that the temple was damaged or destroyed. It was the capture and sack of Antioch which was the main achievement of both campaigns, and in both cases it was clearly a political gesture, as much a humiliation for the Roman enemy as the capture of their emperor.

This not to say that Doliche was not damaged in the invasions. If it was captured it was almost certainly looted, and the temple, which was presumably rich, would surely be a magnet for looters. But all this is not a convincing explanation for the collapse of the religion which is perceived to have taken place in the rest of the empire. There had been similar disasters in Syria to other empire-wide religions and they had not had such an effect. The most spectacular and best-known was the destruction of the temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem, which did not bring Judaism to an end; indeed it stimulated a number of crucial changes to the religion which enabled it to survive and prosper for the next 2000 years. The collapse of the attempt by Emperor Elagabalus to persuade the Romans to

worship his version of the sun god may be considered a similar event, though it cannot be said that the Emperor's murder was more than a political event; worship of the sun continued nevertheless. Neither the Jews nor the worshippers of the sun god had been forced or induced to abandon their religion because of those disasters; indeed Judaism was seen to have been strengthened by the experience, and was able to reinterpret its ideology to cope with the absence of the previously regarded necessity of having a temple as its centre-piece. Similarly the worship of the sun god was not abandoned with Elagabalus' failure, nor indeed with the capture of Emesa by the Palmyrans, nor with its role as the headquarters of the usurper Uranius; indeed the sun god made a return at the highest imperial level when the Emperor Aurelian built a huge temple to that god in Rome in 274. It does not seem necessary to claim that the worshippers of Jupiter Dolichenus actually abandoned their beliefs; nor is it certain that those beliefs depended on the existence of the Doliche temple. It could be argued that the existence of a widely spread priesthood would guarantee the continuation of its worship, and the numerous Dolichenums would do the same.

There are a sufficient number of records of devotion to Dolichenus which were made after the disasters of the 250s to show that the worship of Dolichenus did continue. The dating of inscriptions, and even their production, largely ceased in much of the empire in the second half of the third century, but there are enough which refer to Dolichenus to show that devotion to the god continued in several parts of the empire. The most striking is an inscription dated 286 from Vindolanda on the British Wall.[232] There are also several others from elsewhere which are dated to the 'second half of the third century'. Given that the Doliche temple is claimed to have ceased to operate from 252/253, or from 260 at the latest, an inscription of such a date stands a good chance of being later than that purported and putative destruction.

One of these inscriptions is from Lambaesis in Africa, where the *armorum custos* of legion III *Augusta* coupled Jupiter Dolichenus with Sol Invictus in a dedication which is said to be 'probably' from the Dolichenum.[233] Sol Invictus is the Aurelian proposal as a universal religion, of the 270s, and so the inscription would most likely be of that date. At Virunum in Raetia two soldiers of the legion II *Italica* paid for an altar, which was also probably in the Dolichenum there, which is likely to be fairly late[234] – these 'probablies' are another element of uncertainty to go with the imprecise dating. In Dacia, at Sacidava, a centurion called Probus made a dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus, which is dated either to the mid-third century or even by one study to the fourth century; needless to say, given the general acceptance of the cessation of Dolichenus-worship from 260, this late date has not been generally accepted,[235] but in light of other examples it now seems worth reconsidering. The situation in Dacia is particularly worth contemplating. The worship of Dolichenus in the province was noteworthy in the years before 250: there are no less than five inscriptions concerning Dolichenus from the province from the reign of Gordian III (238–244), which is more than from all the rest of the empire;[236] the worship of the god would thus seem to have been flourishing in Dacia in the mid-third century; a late inscription

is therefore not surprising. On the other hand, since the province of Dacia was abandoned by the empire in 274 (the Emperor Aurelian again) the suggested fourth-century date is extremely unlikely: a third-century date between 250 and 274 is, on the other hand, perfectly possible.

Other 'late' dated inscriptions come from a variety of sites, equally scattered through the empire: two come from the Dolichenum at Dura-Europus in Mesopotamia and are dated 239 and 251,[237] the second being only a year or two before the city was captured by the Sassanids; two are from the Aventine temple in Rome, both dated 244;[238] one is from near Preslav in Moesia Inferior from the reign of Gordian III (238–244),[239] and one from Rigomagus on the Rhine frontier in Germania Inferior, an altar offered by a priest, Arcius Marinus, on behalf of the men of *cohors* I *Flavia*, in the year 250.[240]

It is also worth pointing out that there are at least nine other inscriptions dated to various periods in the first half of the third century, some no more closely dated than 'the first half', others fairly precise. That is, putting these along with those already discussed in the previous paragraphs, the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus was clearly as flourishing in many parts of the empire in the first half of the third century as it was in Dacia, and it can be claimed, with some certainty, that it continued, if on a reduced scale, for the rest of that century. The lessening of inscriptional evidence in the latter half of that century is not confined to the commemoration of Jupiter Dolichenus, but is the result of the failure, or abandonment, of the 'epigraphic habit' throughout the empire; this cannot therefore be used to explain the end of Dolichenus as an active religion.

The possible destruction of the Doliche temple may well have been a factor in the apparent decline in the worship of the god seated at that place, but it was not decisive in the way it has been supposed for the worship elsewhere, since it is clear that the worship did continue after whatever had happened in Syria. There were other factors involved, one of which was the destruction of many of the Dolichenums in the rest of the empire.

A list of those Dolichenums which suffered destruction has been compiled, of which there were a dozen along the frontiers of the Rhine and the Danube stretching from Germania Inferior to Moesia Inferior.[241] Unfortunately the suggested dating of much of this destruction to the year 235 or thereabouts cannot be accepted. This had been connected to casual comments by the historian Herodian and the author of the third-century parts of the *Historia Augusta* that the Emperor Maximinus Thrax had stolen several temple and sanctuary treasuries, but this is not related to any particular time or action.[242] Also the attempt to force the evidence of destruction into a single year fails.

And yet these Dolichenums really were destroyed. That at Vetoniania/Pfunz is known to have been destroyed in 233, along with the fort and the *vicus*, by a raid by the Alamanni (before Maximinus' usurpation). The evidence of fighting and destruction at the camp was all too obvious.[243] Similarly, the fort (and thus the Dolichenum) at Saalburg was sacked in the same year in the same war, though in this case the fort was reoccupied by the Roman forces until the abandonment

of the region of the Agri Decumates in 260;[244] whether the Dolichenum was restored is not clear, but even so its destruction would not necessarily end the worship. In Thrace the little circular Dolichenum at Egeta was still in use when a dedication naming the Emperor Elagabalus was placed there; its destruction cannot be dated more accurately than after 222, though it probably did take place in the third century.[245]

And so on. The destructions occurred, but the simultaneity in their dating is not demonstrable. Instead, the destructions must have been spread over a generation or more. Those at Pfunz and Saalburg were perhaps the first. That at Carnuntum cannot have happened at the beginning of Maximinus' reign, as suggested, since there was a dedication dated in his reign in that Dolichenum.[246] The abandonment of the Agri Decumates, and the construction of a new defence line – the 'Lake Constance frontier' – would open up several Dolichenums to a leisurely sacking by the incoming Alamanni – Wiesbaden, Stockstadt, Mauer an der Uhl – if they bothered, but the units stationed there, and the inhabitants of the towns and villages associated with the abandoned territory, would have had plenty of warning of the evacuation, and possibly a promise that they would later be able to return. At Mauer they hid their treasures, but did not return,[247] also at Sorviodunum/Straubing. These were, of course, not the only forts taken and destroyed in this war.

The forces of the Emperor Maximinus must be acquitted of these destructions. It does not seem likely that deportees would have continued to honour him if he had been responsible for deliberately seeking out and sacking their buildings, and at least two dedications in his name have been found in Dolichenums. So the destruction may be assigned to other enemies, either of Rome or of Dolichenus, and either Roman or barbarian, but still spread over various points in the mid-third century. The destruction involved at least one fort captured and not reoccupied, and at least one case where treasures were secured but were not recovered, so one must assume that the deportees may not have survived either. In other cases the evidence does suggest deliberate destruction – at Virunum in Raetia, for example, though here there is an inscription of the second half of the third century in the god's name, and later at Carnuntum, where the contents of the Dolichenum were scattered and broken.[248] When such scattering occurred is of course unknown, but the warfare on the northern frontier in the third century was severe enough that if the barbarians did not succeed in looting a place, it is quite possible the Roman army would do so (and Carnuntum did not cease to be active Roman centre, civilian and military, until the fifth century, so the sack of the Dolichenum was most likely the work of Romans, civilians or soldiers, or religious enemies, than unknown barbarians). The soldiers demanded their pay, no matter what, and the emperors made promises, so temple treasuries, which could contain substantial amounts of precious metal, were fair game.

The pressure on the worshippers of Jupiter Dolichenus in the mid-third century was thus heavy. As a military god he was clearly vulnerable in the case of any military defeat. The sack of the main temple in Doliche (which may

be presumed, even if its destruction cannot) and the kidnapping of its staff into Persia (which must also be presumed) would make it difficult, perhaps impossible, to send out priests to the Dolichenums in the rest of the empire for some time. The destruction of those Dolichenums thus complements the failure of the main temple to continue its spiritual and priestly support, but was not directly consequent on it. In some cases the worship did continue, notably in areas which had had to make do without priests earlier, such as Africa and Britain, where post-260 inscriptions are known or strongly implied. The evacuation of Dacia by the Emperor Aurelian in 274 will have further disrupted the strong religious connections between Syria and that province.

The concentration of much of the worship of Dolichenus on the northern frontier, and the vulnerability of the Doliche temple to Sassanid attack, would thus have weakened the empire-wide organisation of the religion. But it may be that the *coup de grace* was performed rather later than has been assumed, by decisions taken first by the Emperor Aurelian and then by the Emperor Constantine. Aurelian's promotion of the worship of the sun god from the 270s – another Syrian-based deity – may well have had a serious demoralising effect on the devotees of Dolichenus, and perhaps attracted those who opportunistically switched to the new imperially favoured god. In Africa the last record of Dolichenus is linked with Sol Invictus, perhaps an indication that the two were becoming united, possibly opportunely. The worship of Dolichenus, given that it was a version of Jupiter, was clearly in part a Roman-loyalist demonstration, and the promotion of a related god by the first victorious emperor in a generation would be attractive to such people. Aurelian's own murder in 275 could well thus have been a further blow. Then the progressive adoption of the saviour-religion Christianity and its predilection for the violent suppression of competitors no doubt finished off the last remnants of Dolichenus worship, probably during the reign of Constantine, who favoured Christianity from early on. The god's adherents had long been hospitable to other gods – there are several links with Jupiter Heliopolitanus – and there were fourteen other gods 'present' in the sanctuary of the *equites* in Rome, not to mention the Dolichenus–Sol Invictus link in the African record, so it would have seemed quite possible for worshippers to slide towards the worship of another god if Jupiter Dolichenus was under pressure, or was thought to be losing his efficacy. Whatever the reason there is no sign of his worship anywhere in the empire, including Rome, after AD 300 at the latest.

VI. Other Syrian deities

The most renowned Syrian deities were the two Jupiters, Dolichenus and Heliopolitanus, together with *Dea Syra* and Yahweh, until Christianity swept the board with the assistance of the imperial government. A number of other Syrian gods and goddesses also feature, mostly with only a few dedications – or maybe only one – in the rest of the empire outside Syria, usually made by a native of the place.

Sol

Thus there are three examples of dedications to Sol Elagabalus before the attempt made by the Emperor Elagabalus to bring his god from Emesa to become the main deity of the empire at Rome. During the reign of Antoninus Pius, the centurion L. Floridius Bassus of the *cohors* III *Breucorum* dedicated an altar to the emperor, to the god Sol Heliogabalus, and to Minerva, at Laurium (Lorch) at the border of Germania Superior and Raetia on the Antonine *limes*.[249] This is an interesting triad not noted elsewhere, reminiscent in a way of the Heliopolitanus group, and it was clearly a personal selection by Bassus. A second inscription, to *deo Soli Aelagabalo*, was made by the *cohors milliaria Antonina Hemesenorum c.R. sagittariorum* at Intercisa in Pannonia Inferior in which the legate Baebius Caecillianus and the tribune Q. Modius Rufinus were named; the inscription is dated to the latter part of the reign of Septimius Severus;[250] the connection between the regiment, Emesa, and Sol Elagabalus is obvious. Note that these dedications come well before the advent of the Emperor Elagabalus, but at a time when Emesa had become central to the imperial system because it was the origin of the Empress Iulia Domna. The participation of the legate and the tribune in the dedication would suggest there was an official element about this item.

Also from Intercisa, but undated, is an inscription to Sol Invictus, from an Aurelius Arbas – the name suggests a third-century date, and an origin in Syria – and a lady whose name began with Aelia, probably his wife. He reused an earlier inscription, partly erasing the original. The identity of Sol Invictus with Sol Elagabalus is highly probable; the inscription was probably made before Emperor Aurelian's boosting of Sol Invictus.[251] Sol Invictus is also present at Calceus Herculis/Messad in Africa, a place where the *numerus Hemenesorum* was stationed; a centurion of that regiment was responsible for the god's temple, but the building is undated.[252]

There is a distinct absence of any dedications to Sol Elagabalus during or after the reign of the Emperor Elagabalus, in contrast to several which have been found from the previous half-century. The god was apparently acceptable before the emperor's attempted religion reforms at Rome – it was, as a sun god, worshipped by the legion III *Gallica* by 69 – but then it seems to have been discarded along with the emperor himself, even though his cousin and adopted successor, Alexander Severus, was connected with the home city of the god, Emesa. The only possible representation of the god outside Rome was in Spain, where he was depicted alongside Athena Allath and Cipris Chinazaia in a triad group familiar from other Syrian deities[253] – and at Rome also, of course.

Dusares

Puteoli in Italy, which has already been featured in the dedications to Jupiter Heliopolitanus and the Syrian goddess, was a cosmopolitan place at which a whole series of non-Italian deities were commemorated. The Nabataean god Dusares was commemorated on a marble plaque by Ali, a silversmith, and

his wife and children, in 54 BC, and the inscription was restored in AD 5; the Nabataean King Maliku was also mentioned, and the inscription itself was in Nabataean.[254] In AD 11 Zaidu and Abdelge, the sons of Hainu, recorded an offering of two camels to Dusares; again the inscription was in Nabataean and the current king (Haretat) was mentioned[255] – the mention of the king may well be connected with the fact that he was presumably the chief priest of Dusares in the home kingdom. An individual pair of marble plaques, a series of altars and bases, and a public notice which may be a boundary marker of a piece of property, have been found at various parts of the city, all of which refer to *Dusares sacrum*, probably a temple of Dusares, though the building itself has not been located.[256] The only approximate date for any of these is in the first centuries BC and AD; it seems likely that the extinction of the Nabataean kingdom in AD 106 cut the ground from under the devotees to the god, particularly since they appear to have linked it generally with loyalty to the Nabataean kings. The linkage with the Nabataean kings and the deliberate use of the Nabataean language in the early dedications suggests a social separation from the local Italian population at first, which was then followed by the gradual integration of later generations and a simultaneous distancing from the homeland. The later inscriptions are in Latin, and the only name mentioned in any of them is 'Iulius T.', all of which looks like the result of assimilation. The temple, from the dates of the records, did not last long into the second century.

Others

At Puteoli there are also single records of three other Syrian deities. Two priests, M. Nemorius Eutychiarus, who had been elevated to the rank of *eques* by Antoninus Pius, and M. Nemorius Callistus (presumably his son or his father) put up a statue to commemorate the event of their promotion, dedicated to Jupiter Damascenus;[257] the city was presumably their origin. Both were priests, and Callistus was the 'patron', presumably of a temple or shrine. Note that both had Greek names. The 'Tyrians of Puteoli' made a dedication to Baal Melqart, who was the city god of Tyre.[258] In AD 79 the 'Sareptans of Puteoli' inscribed a record of 'the arrival by boat of the god of Sarepta',[259] another Phoenician merchant city. This was the fateful year in the Bay of Naples, with the eruption of Vesuvius; maybe the arrival of the god was in some way connected with that event, perhaps a gesture of thanks for survival. All of these are records from or by multiple people, just as were those of Dusares and *Dea Syra* and Heliopolitanus. The Tyrians and the Sareptans had clearly formed themselves into some sort of social-cum-religious clubs, just as had the Berytans who celebrated Jupiter Heliopolitanus.

Bel of Apamaea is recorded in two places, at Tridentum (Trento) in northern Italy, by 'Sextus of Apamaea',[260] and on an altar at Vasio (Vaison) in Gallia Narbonensis. The originator at Vasio is not known; it has been suggested that it was the record of an oracular response.[261] In Pannonia, Dea Azizos is named on an epitaph, dated to the reign of Severus Alexander, and, as *deus fortis Azizos*, he was commemorated by a group of soldiers at Napoca in Dacia in 257.[262]

In Britannia someone lost a chalcedony intaglio inscribed with the Tyche of Antioch;[263] oddly enough, a merchant of statuettes of Tyche, who came from Antioch, died at Messana in Sicily at an unknown date; there seems no way to make a connection between these, no matter how one might try. Nevertheless, a statuette of the Antiochene Tyche has been found in southern Spain, near Antequera, and an altar at Cordoba had dedications to not less than seven Syrian gods and goddesses.[264]

The visits of both Trajan and Hadrian to the shrine of Zeus on the summit of Mount Casius above Seleukeia-in-Pieria may be the origin of a series of commemorations of that god in Greece (at Kerkyra, Delos, Epidauros, and Athens), at Pelusion in Egypt, at Carthage and Rome, and at Carthago Nova in Spain (on an anchor), and at Heddenheim in Germany.[265]

Summary

The occasional commemorations of, and dedications to, various Syrian deities cannot be the basis of any serious conclusions. The distribution seems to reflect that of *Dea Syra* or Jupiter Heliopolitanus rather than the more comprehensive Jupiter Dolichenus. Their contribution to the totality of Syrian influence in the empire is thus small, but does, in a minor way, tend to confirm conclusions which can be drawn from others.

VII. Christianity

The difficulty in estimating Christianity's spread in the three centuries between the birth of Jesus Christ and the acceptance of the religion by the Emperor Constantine is that the evidence is unreliable – even more unreliable than for the other Syrian cults. For the other religions the existence of epigraphic records provides a concrete basis for discussion, even if it has certain inherent limitations taken on its own, but Christianity's condition during those three centuries as an illicit religion, to which the Roman state was intermittently hostile, has reduced epigraphic evidence for it to a minimum, at least until the third century, so that we have to rely on surviving written evidence. But this written evidence emanates from Christian writers almost exclusively, and they are even more prone to exaggerate and distort the early successes and the troubles of their religion than Jewish historians of the modern age on Judaism.[266]

The illicit nature of Christianity has meant that its adherents are often noted merely in adverse situations, as defendants in court, or criminals under punishment. Since it was necessary to practice their religion clandestinely, the physical evidence of churches and paraphernalia is missing; it seems that worship and communal celebration took place for a long time largely in private houses (like the Jews and their smaller synagogues), so that the architectural evidence of buildings scarcely exists. In this condition the Christians were similar to the Jews, of course, which is hardly surprising since the Christians started out as a Jewish sect, and in some cases the physical remains cannot be distinguished

between the two.[267] So the physical remains of early Christianity are few. This means that we are heavily reliant on the written sources, which are generally biased, invented, exaggerated, and unreliable; any approach to clarity over the spread of the religion is very difficult.

It is necessary, therefore, to examine the sources very carefully, and with scepticism. An example is Rome, where, as will be noted in the next paragraph, there were undoubtedly Christians present by the middle of the first century. But the Christian sources are all too keen to establish that the city was a major Christian centre, for reasons of their own connected with the pretensions of the later popes. (It is also a pleasing conceit for the Christians to believe that the imperial capital was a major centre of the faith while still illegal.) There is a list of the early 'bishops' of Rome, dating back to St Peter, reinforced by a shrine, said to be that of Peter, recently claimed to be discovered. But the list of bishops was compiled later, and seems to consist largely of names of priests rather than bishops; the effects of Peter's residence in the city, if he actually went there, are unknown, and the shrine of Peter is not proven. A recent reconsideration of Christian officials in the city places the first bishop, or a man who can be recognised as such, about AD 150.[268]

There is also the evidence of the Acts of the Apostles, a Jewish-Christian account of religious heroics, and in particular the account therein of the travels and missionary work of Paul of Tarsus. These is no reason to doubt that Paul made these journeys, but there is surely every reason to doubt the long-term effects he had. The fact that Paul visited a place, and perhaps persuaded some residents, usually Jews, to become Christians, is not evidence that a Christian community continued in existence in those places ever after. (This is exactly the problem there is with singleton inscriptions.) Something more than the word of the missionary himself is required. The ideal evidence comes, in fact, from the pens of Christianity's opponents and critics.

The result of the early evidence is that we can state with some certainty that there were Christians in Antioch in the 50s BC, where they were first described as such,[269] and at Rome about the same time, where they were said to have been persecuted under the Emperors Claudius, Nero, and later by Domitian, and were sufficiently disliked for Nero to attempt to make them the scapegoats for the fire in the city in 64;[270] there were apparently considerable numbers of them in Bithynia in about 110 when the governor C. Plinius Secundus corresponded with the Emperor Trajan on how to deal with them, though many of them quickly abjured their supposed beliefs under pressure;[271] there were Christians in Asia Minor in the reign of Hadrian, who had to repeat Trajan's reply about dealing with them when he was appealed to by the governor of Asia.[272] Trajan is said to have ordered the execution of Ignatius of Antioch in 115, allegedly for insulting the emperor.[273] There is a slightly more acceptable martyrdom narrative of the trial and death of Polycarp in 155;[274] also there is a reasonably acceptable instance in inland Gaul in the 170s when several were executed at Lyons;[275] there were others in Carthage in about 200 when Tertullian discussed their situation and other executions took place.[276]

Several elements in North African Christianity indicate that it grew out of the local Jewish community. Since that community was concentrated in and about Carthage, Christianity appeared there first, and for a century or so it remained there. The local Church was addicted to meetings in councils to discuss common problems, and those attending, even if they came from a mere village, were reckoned to be bishops; there were therefore dozens of North African bishops. The earliest evidence for Christians in North Africa dates from about 180, but it seems unlikely that they were sufficiently numerous to be noticeable outside Carthage for another century.[277]

No doubt there are other examples of executions ('martyrdoms') than those already noted, some of which were certainly invented by zealous Christians later, but on the whole it has to be admitted that Christianity was only a minor religion in the empire before about 200. Such large-scale public events as at Lyons and Carthage, some of which are recorded by reputable witnesses who were not Christian (Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny) cannot be gainsaid, though their importance has most certainly been exaggerated by Christian writers to increase the apparent importance of their religion. The cruelty of the killings was evidently intended to deter those less committed Christians, and judging by the results of Pliny's method (executing the committed, pardoning those who denied), the method was generally successful; it is only later that these 'martyrdoms' were gloried in – by those who were usually sitting in a study. Cyprian in c.250 recorded 'mass apostasy' by many Christians in the face of the enmity – 'persecution' – of the Emperor Decius.[278] No doubt there were other such cases.

We can therefore state with some certainty that Christianity was a religion being practiced in Bithynia, Rome, Gaul, and North Africa by AD 200, and probably in other regions as well, but we cannot know of the numbers involved at any place or region at any particular time. A map can be constructed of places where the religion is attested 'before 304' (the start of Diocletian's attempt to suppress Christianity in favour of a revamped Roman paganism – the 'great persecution' of the Christians), and appears in an *Atlas of the Early Christian Church*.[279] As usual with such efforts the evidence comes from many sources, some dubious, some invented, and others where the evidence is exact but where it applies only to a single incident, without a larger chronological context; at the same time there will be gaps in the evidence where no record exists, and where optimists and apologists are often tempted to fill the gap by analogy and 'must have'. As an example there is Tertullian's rhetoric in 212: 'we have filled everything you have – cities, tenements, forts, towns, exchanges, camps, tribes, palace, senate, forum. All we have left you is the temples'. There is not a word of this assertion which can be proved; it is manifestly untrue in detail and in total.[280]

Bearing all this in mind, using a historian's scepticism, and therefore accepting that the map is only a very rough and exaggerated approximation to the reality, utilising evidence spread over three centuries, it is evident nevertheless that Christianity had spread widely but unevenly by the third century. There are large numbers of places in Asia Minor and North Africa where Christians are recorded, in the latter case as a result of the survival of a participant list of

eighty-seven 'bishops' who attended at a local council in Carthage in 256 (though the existence of a bishop does not imply a large number of followers). That is, these apparently dense populations of Christians are the result of unusually reliable (Christian) records – but it is not permissible to extend this to argue that other regions, had the evidence of the same sort survived, would have shown the same density of Christians. Syria, especially the cities along the coast, was well represented, but there were Syrian areas of strong 'pagan' practice geographically quite close to some of these centres which still existed well into the fifth century, so it cannot be claimed that Syria was a 'Christian country'.[281] Egypt had a string of places where Christians are known by AD 300, but the density of the general population in Egypt was such that a scatter of places where Christians existed is not particularly convincing of a large number of practitioners. (Many 'lapsed' under pressure, as with Pliny's Bithynians and Cyprian's Africans – that is, were less than enthusiastic converts, and perhaps went along perhaps for social reasons, or simply to stop Christian nagging.) In other places the fact that a Christian, or a community of Christians, lived in a particular place is not evidence that it was a wholly Christian place, for in all likelihood the Christians were most often only a small minority amid a non-Christian or indifferent population. In Europe only central Italy and southern Spain had large numbers of places providing indications of Christians in any number; both of these areas, like Egypt, were well populated and so the apparent strong presence of Christians only reflects the general distribution of population as a whole, and their apparent numbers are no indication of the density of Christians within the population.

Outside these regions the presence of Christians is either thin or non-existent even as late as AD 300. Greece, including Crete and the Asia Minor coast, had few Christian centres, despite Paul's efforts in the first century – no doubt an effect of loyalty to the well-rooted local Olympian gods. North Italy, the whole of Gaul, and most of Spain had similarly a wide but thin spread of occurrences which could never convince anyone that Christianity's presence was numerous or powerful. In Gaul, for example, the fact that a series of executions took place at Lyon in the 170s cannot be taken as an indication that Christianity had powerfully penetrated into Gaul by that date; indeed, such persecutions undoubtedly deterred many and persuaded the less than enthusiastic to desert the Church. The north and centre of Asia Minor was also poorly represented. The lands of the northern frontier of the empire were largely free of Christians, and this included Britain, where the earliest Christian known of is the martyr Albanus, who died probably in the 250s (if he existed), but whose story was backdated later to 209 in a fairly typical redating by Christian writers to claim an early and important presence.[282]

Some further observations on the reliability or otherwise of this distribution as a tool for understanding the history of the time would include the reminder that this covers three centuries of records: for Bithynia, for example, we have Pliny's evidence that he did not know how he should deal with the Christians in his province, but that he concluded quickly and correctly enough that with a certain negative pressure from the imperial government most of the so-called

Christians would rapidly cease to be so.[283] In many parts of the empire, both before and after the loss of the western provinces, there is plenty of evidence for the survival and health of pagan beliefs and practices. Augustine of Hippo in the late fourth century complained of its prevalence among the Roman aristocracy, and the Emperor Justinian sent out missionaries into interior Asia Minor, where they found '70,000' people to baptise, in the sixth century. In Syria a pagan group survived into the tenth century, while in Spain a council was still condemning pagan practices in the seventh century.

These considerations return us to the evidence utilised to produce the map of the spread of Christianity by about AD 300 mentioned earlier, which in effect amounts very largely to a record of the existence of bishops. The attendance of such men at councils was noted in the minutes, and their correspondence discussing doctrinal details often survives – those of Cyprian of Carthage, or Augustine of Hippo, for example – because they were concerned with points of doctrine, always of primary interest to such men, which is just an aspect of bureaucracy, of course. These men were also the preeminent targets for imprisonment and execution by the imperial authorities, and their travails are therefore recorded. Such bishops lived in cities, so the map very largely records the cities of the empire, and yet the mass of the population was found in the countryside, even if they may have been counted as inhabitants of the cities' territories.[284] It is notorious that the word for non-believers, 'pagans', was derived from the word for country-folk rustics, implying a powerful division between urban and rural in matters of Christianity.[285]

The fact that the history of Christianity in the early centuries has largely been researched and written by committed Christians, even if they do attempt often to achieve a balanced academic outlook, inevitably colours their work. Titles such as *The Victory of the Cross*[286] give the game away from the start, and the achievements of conversion may be generally assumed to be exaggerated and often superficial. This is not to say that conversion did not take place, but even the evidence collected by researchers cannot conceal the fact that the incidence of Christianity in the Roman Empire even by the end of the third century was very patchy and, where it existed, that the Christians were concentrated in the cities. That the Emperor Constantine claimed to have been converted may or may not be correct – either the claim or the conversion – but his acceptance of an alliance between the imperial power and the Christians was clearly politics on a grand scale, and a gesture fully in the imperial tradition. For in the previous three centuries several emperors had attempted the same trick. Augustus had revamped the old Roman religion, and had discreetly encouraged emperor-worship as a means of exerting social control;[287] Elagabalus had promoted his local sun god from Emesa for imperial devotion, a matter repeated by the Emperor Aurelian's adoption and promotion of the sun god in the 270s, and both of these had been aimed at encouraging social unity – as well as promoting support for their regimes, of course.[288] Within Constantine's own lifetime there had been another renovation of the old religion by the Emperor Diocletian, which was followed by his attempt to suppress Christianity in his 'great persecution'.[289]

Augustus' caution and traditionalism were rewarded by a settlement of the official Roman religion which lasted for the next two centuries, even when he himself disturbed the situation when he was acclaimed divine after his death, and therefore that temples to his cult, usually coupled with Rome, as he had asked, could be built.[290] The attempts to repeat this religious *coup* by Elagabalus and Aurelian failed, as much perhaps because of their early deaths as because of the attempts themselves – one reason for Augustus' success was his and his immediate successor's longevity. Diocletian's attempt was more likely to succeed, if Constantine had persisted with it. But if he did so, Constantine would be faced with continuing Christian hostility, which would clearly gravely weaken the empire, so he co-opted the enemy – but his main purpose was to strengthen the empire, not to promote the Christian Church. In the process, however, as with all his religiously revolutionary predecessors, the imperial favour did incidentally also promote the newly favoured religion.

That Constantine chose to do this is not so much a 'victory of the cross' as a first-class political *coup*. Nor is Constantine's decision evidence of the power of the Christian Church at the time, other than evidence of its power to be difficult – it contrasted in this with every other religion of the empire, defying the authorities, insisting on, and glorying in, martyrdoms – in effect mounting a determined resistance to the pretensions of the governing system. Its acceptance by that government was therefore a victory for an insurgency. It is, of course, notorious that one of the first results of the emperor's *coup* was the development of a series of internal disputes over the content, purpose, nature, and organisation of that Church. Constantine found that much of his time had to be devoted to attempting to reconcile argumentative and recalcitrant bishops. One might suggest that it served him right. The quarrelsomeness of Christians was surely understood by him and his advisors well before he made his toleration clear – it has continued to the present day, of course. On the other hand, a divided Church was much less powerful than one which could confront imperial power united.

But the fact remains that by 312, when Constantine announced that he favoured Christianity, Christians were in a small minority of the imperial population, not only amongst the whole population, but in most, perhaps all, of the provinces and the cities as well. Its spread from its origin in Palestine to all the provinces had in large part followed the presence of Jews in the empire – it was a Jewish sect at first – and so it appeared first in Antioch, Asia Minor, and Rome, where there were substantial numbers of Jews already present. It may be that its presence in Egypt was also a result of the Jewish presence there, or perhaps of the presence of Syrians. By the end of the first century, however, it had freed itself from the Jewish connection and was able to spread on its own – in Domitian's 'persecution', one of the triggers was the adoption of Judaism by some of the royal family, and it is evident that at the time Judaism and Christianity were still regarded in official minds as in many ways part of the same set. Its heavy presence in North Africa was probably largely autonomous and unconnected with other Christian groups, which may be one of the explanations for the local adoption of the particular Christian 'heresy' which developed there. But even

two centuries after Tertullian's evidence of the presence of Christianity in the city of Carthage, Augustine's evidence is that the countrymen of Africa were still largely unaffected. In many areas, particularly in Europe, this was also the situation in the cities as well as in the countryside.

The spread of Christianity therefore complemented in many ways that of Jupiter Dolichenus, in that, like Judaism and *Dea Syra*, it concentrated in the urban populations of the empire, but tended to be rejected, or perhaps ignored, by the military and the military provinces along the frontier. It also spread at much the same time and at much the same rate as these competitors, but unlike Dolichenus, it tended to free itself of the Syrian connection – though both made use of professional priests. Some of the bitter arguments within Christianity were essentially about the acceptance of Greek and Roman attitudes. Participation in the imperial system was seen as a means of achieving a Christian 'victory', a process set under way by the first-century proselytisers. It may well be that by Constantine's time Christianity had clothed itself in a Roman garb, which made it more easily acceptable to the imperial government; at the same time, of course, Christianity in Syria (and Africa) did not take that path, and remained detached from the westernising Church which Constantine adopted. How far, therefore, Christianity was really still a Syrian religion by AD 300 is a moot question: the answer is, probably, not very much.

Notes

1 H. Seyrig, 'Bel de Palmyre', *Syria* 48, 1971, 85–114.
2 H.J.W. Drijvers, *The Religion of Palmyra*, Leiden 1976, and J. Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, Leiden 1979; this temple has been extensively damaged by the vandalism of 'Islamic State' since Palmyra was captured in 2015, and no doubt further damaged in its subsequent reconquest and re-loss.
3 'Les tribus et leur dieux', chapter 2 of D. Schlumberger, *Le Palmyrene du nord-ouest*, Paris 1951.
4 *AE* 1983, 797; spellings vary.
5 *AE* 1977, 694.
6 *AE* 2004, 1216; the suggestion is that the dedication, which is only fragmentary, should be to *deus [Solis Ierh]ebol*.
7 *AE* 2004, 1299.
8 *AE* 2011, 1084.
9 Doina Banea, 'Integrarea Culturala a Palmyrenilor in Dacia Romana', *Apulum* 39, 2002, 185–199.
10 I. Piso and D. Banea, 'Epigraphica Tibiscensia', *Apulum* 42, 2005, 145–156.
11 *AE* 1933, 42 (= *AE* 1980, 952).
12 *CIL* VIII 2497.
13 M. Janon, *Bulletin d'Archaeologie Algerienne* 11, 1966–1967, 222–224 (= *AE* 1967, 572).
14 G.-C. Picard, *Castell Dimmidi*, Algiers 1944, no. 15.
15 Ibid, no. 9.
16 These and other references are collected in Arbia Hilali, 'La Mentalite religieux des Soldats de l'Armee Romaine d'Afrique: l'exemple des dieux Syriens et Palmyreniennes, in L. de Blois, Peter Funke, and Johannes Haber, *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions. . .*, Leiden 2006, 150–162; see also E. E. Schneider, 'Palmireni in Africa: Calceus Heruclis', in Attilio Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa Romana* 5, Sassari, Sardinia, 1988?, 383–395.

17 M. A. R. College, *The Art of Palmyra*, London 1976, 231; Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, Cambridge, 1998, 258–259.
18 Studies of the Jewish presence outside Palestine include E. Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC–A.D. 135)*, rev. ed., 3 vols., Edinburgh 1973–1987; J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, California 1995 (but he concentrates on Egypt, with smaller sections on Cyrenaica, Asia, and Rome and on the cultural effect on Judaism); E. S. Gruen, *Diaspora, Jews amongst Greeks and Romans*, Cambridge, MA, 2002, looks at Rome, Alexandria, and Asia and again at the effects on Jews and Judaism; several essays in Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rayak, *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, London 1992 look at the *diaspora*; R. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 2nd ed., Leiden 1981, is mainly political, but also has three chapters on the diaspora. None of these can be considered comprehensive studies of the spread of the Jews into the whole Roman Empire.
19 A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Documents from the Fifth Century*, Oxford 1923.
20 Smallwood, *Jews*, chapter 15; Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, Baltimore 1997, 99–109.; T. D. Barnes, 'Trajan and the Jews', *JJS* 40, 1989, 145–162.
21 Barclay, *Mediterranean*, 19–230, is detailed on this; also Gruen, *Diaspora*, 54–83, on Alexandria; R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Princeton, NJ, 1993, is more balanced than C. W. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity from Its Origins to 451 CE*, Leiden 1990.
22 S. Applebaum, *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene*, Leiden 1979; Barclay, *Mediterranean*, 232–242; for epigraphic evidence, G. Luderitz, *Corpus Judens der Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika*, Wiesbaden 1983.
23 Smallwood, *Jews*, 412–413.
24 Josephus, *AJ* 12.147–153.
25 Barclay, *Mediterranean*, 265–270.
26 Barclay, *Mediterranean*, chapter 9; Smallwood, *Jews*, 121; Gruen, *Diaspora*, chapter 3; P. R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, Cambridge 1991, discusses those at Sardis, Priene, Akmoneia, and Apameia.
27 *Acts* notes such groups at Antioch-in-Pisidia, Perge, Iconium, Lystra, and Ephesos.
28 E. L. Gibson, 'Jews in the Inscriptions of Smyrna', *JJS* 66, 2005, 66–79.
29 *I. Smyrna* and *I. Ephesos, passim*, naming thirty-five people, most of whom are or appear to be Jews.
30 *AE* 1999, 1579–1588; *AE* 2009, 1439 (= *SEG* 57, 2007, 1374) for the necropolis at Hierapolis.
31 *I. Prusa*, 115.
32 *SEG* XVIII, 1993, 510; cf Gruen, *Diaspora*, 109–111.
33 M. Goodman, 'Jewish Proselytising in the First Century', in J. Lieu and J. North (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, London 1992, 53–78 at 69; the evidence is from the unreliable Valerius Maximus.
34 Smallwood, *Jews*, 201–219.
35 Barclay, *Mediterranean*, chapter 10.
36 Juvenal 14.100–104; the satirist, of course, disliked easterners generally, and detested Egyptians; he wasn't very fond even of Romans.
37 H. Solin, 1977, 'Juden und Syrer in der Romischen Welt', *ANRW* II 8, 587–789, provides lists of names culled from inscriptions and other sources; Roman Jews are at 654–657.
38 *JIWE* 2.183.
39 *JIWE* 1.13–15 and 18.
40 *JIWE* 1.7 (from Aquileia); 161 (from Thermae Himeraeae, Sicily).
41 *JIWE* 1.26
42 Solin, 'Juden und Syrer', 773–727, 734–735, 738–739.
43 Beard et al., *Religions of Rome*, 266–267.
44 *CHJ* 4, figure 2.1, 54.
45 Ibid., chapter 19.

46 *JIWE* 1.15.
47 Smallwood, *Jews*, 120–122 and 220–222, suggests some reasons.
48 Solin, 'Juden und Syrer'.
49 *AE* 2009, 1051.
50 H. Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, 2nd rev. ed., Leiden 1974.
51 A. L. Delattre, *Gamart, ou le necropole juive de Carthage*, Lyon 1898.
52 Noted in Hirschberg, *Jews in North Africa*.
53 *CHJ* 4, chapter 19; *Romans* 15.24; Smallwood, *Jews*, 122, confines this reference to a tentative footnote.
54 Three fairly recent books on Roman Spain, L. A. Curchin, *Roman Spain, Conquest and Assimilation*, London 1991, E. W. Haley, *Baetica Felix*, Austin, TX 2003, and S. J. Keay, *Roman Spain*, London 1988, make no mention of Jews at all, implying that their conclusion is that there were none in the peninsula.
55 Both comments are by Josephus *BJ* 2.183 (Spain); *AJ* 18.257 (Gaul).
56 Detailed in W. P. Bowers, 'Jewish Communities in Spain in the Time of Paul the Apostle', *JTS* NS 26, 1975, 395–402; L. G. Iglesias, *Los Judios en la Espana antigua*, Madrid 1978; it must be said that, despite Bowers' title, the evidence he cites for the Jewish presence in Spain is all later than Paul's time.
57 A. C. Vega (ed.), *Espana sagrada*, 56, Madrid 1957, 196–222; Bowers (previous note), 398.
58 Being especially sceptical, one might also suggest that this was a precautionary piece of legislation copied from some other council's minutes.
59 Bowers (note 3) 399.
60 *CIL* II 1982; *CIJ* 665.
61 J. M. Millas, 'Una Nueva inscription Judaica bilingue en Tartagona', *Sefarad* 17, 1957, 3–10; F. Cantera, *Sinagogas Espanols*, Madrid 1955, 212–217.
62 Anna Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 2013, marks on her maps 4.2 and 4.3, 206, 208, Ebusus (Ibiza) as a major Jewish centre, with which several Jewish communities apparently communicated. This cannot be accepted. The only evidence for any Jewish presence in Ibiza is an item of pottery which is said to have borne the logo of the royal Jewish store in, presumably, Jerusalem. A single pot, no matter how eminent its origin, is hardly evidence for a Jewish presence in Ibiza, and the whole idea of a network of Jewish communities centring on the island is to be rejected.
63 Solin, 'Juden und Syren', 753–755, 760–762; the epigraphic evidence has been collected in D. Noy, Alexander Panayiotis, and Hanswolff Bloedhem, *Incriptiones Judaicae Orientis*, I, *Eastern Europe*, Tubingen 2004, but it is marked by an extravagant credulity as to what was Jewish, and a considerable number of its assertions have to be discarded.
64 *CHJ* 4, fig. 2.1, 54.
65 Philo, *Legatio*, 281.
66 *SEG* XLVIII, 1998, 736.
67 J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias; Greek Inscriptions with Commentary*, Cambridge 1987.
68 For discussion of Jewish proselytism, see M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion*, Oxford 1994, and L. H. Feldman, *Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World*, Princeton, NJ 1993, chapters. 9–11.
69 L. Marfoe, *Kamid el-Loz*, vol. 14, *Settlement History of the Biqa Up to the Iron Age*, Bonn 1998, chapters. 7–8.
70 F. Ragette, *Baalbek*, London 1980; E. A. Myers, *The Ituraeans and the Roman Near East, Reassessing the Sources*, Cambridge 2010; the chapter on archaeology includes an account of a survey of local shrines.
71 J. D. Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, Oxford 1991, 177–179, for the process of founding the colony.
72 Ragette, *Baalbek*, 18–19.
73 *IGLS* VI 2733, is the only epigraphic indication of this phase; cf Ragette, *Baalbek*, 28–30.

74 There is no indication of any Roman emperor at any time claiming credit for the building, nor any clear sign of the source of the finance clearly recorded. W. Ball, *Rome in the East*, London 2000, 44–47, has suggested that the Emesan kings were responsible – but the kings did not survive beyond AD 72, and their heirs were hardly likely to have the resources for such massive work. And, just as there is no sign of imperial financing, there is no trace of Emesan financing either.
75 Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.23.14.
76 Ragette, *Baalbek*, 34, is very certain, more so than the evidence warrants; A. R. Birley, *Hadrian, the Restless Emperor*, London 1997, 68, is more tentative.
77 Birley, *Hadrian*, 230.
78 J. Hajjar, *Le Triade d'Heliopolis-Baalbek*, Leiden 1977, 30; V. T. T. Tihn, *Le Culte des Divinites Orientales en Campanie*, Leiden 1972, 13.
79 *AE* 2006, 312.
80 Hajjar, *Triade*, 299; Tinh, *Culte*, 9.
81 Hajjar, *Triade*, 298 ('son of Sacerdos'); Tinh, *Culte*, 11 ('priest').
82 Hajjar, *Triade* 297; Tinh, *Culte*, 10.
83 The Berytians' offering of 116 does not imply the temple's existence then.
84 The interpretation of the word *cistiber* has occasioned much anguished speculation, from something concerned with the Tiber banks to an office of fire control. In fact, the meaning is unknown, despite some quite remarkably definitive statements on the subject.
85 Hajjar, *Triade*, 288, 289, 292, 296.
86 Ibid., 287.
87 *CIL* VI, 622; Hajjar, *Triade* 286; *Fasti Sacerdotum* 3226.
88 Hajjar, *Triade*, 290.
89 Ibid., 294.
90 N. Goodhue, *The Lucus Furrinae and the Syrian Sanctuary on the Janiculum*, Amsterdam 1975, for an examination of the excavation records and a sorting out of the history of the site; Beard et al., *Religions of Rome*, 283, 384–385, for summaries.
91 Ibid., 266.
92 *SEG* LX, 2010, 1497.
93 Hajjar, *Triade*, 268.
94 Ibid., 305.
95 Ibid; L. Bricoult, 'Les Dieux de l'Orient en Afrique Romaine', *Pallas* 68, 2005, 289–307.
96 Bricoult (previous note) confirms that there are only these two dedications at Lambaesis.
97 Hajjar, *Triade*, 269–271; there are inscriptions from Apamaea commemorating dead soldiers from both legions: J.-Ch. Balty, 'Apamaea in Syria in the Second and Third Centuries AD', *JRS* 78, 1988, 97–104; AE 1993, 1575 and 1578; Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities*, 264–265.
98 Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities*, 272.
99 Ibid., 258, the grave of a soldier of the legion at Seleukeia-Zeugma.
100 Ibid., 273.
101 Ibid., 279.
102 Ibid., 274.
103 Ibid., 275; *AE* 2011, 1000.
104 *CCID* 221
105 Hajjar, *Triade*, 273.
106 *AE* 2004, 1233.
107 *AE* 2008, 1107.
108 Hajjar, *Triade*, 280; *BRGK* 38, 1957, 69.
109 Hajjar, *Triade*, 281.
110 *CIL* XII 3072; see also C. H. Moore, 'The Distribution of Oriental Cults in the Gauls and the Germanies', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 38, 1907, 109–150.
111 *RIB* 1.1783; Hajjar, *Triade*, 282.

112 M. Horig, '*Dea Syra*-Atargatis', *ANRW* II 17.3, 1984, 1550–1564; II *Maccabees* 12.26.
113 Lucian, *De Dea Syra*; a helpful translation is by Herbert A. Strong, London 1913, republished by Amazon.
114 John Garstang in his introduction to Strong's translation (note 106).
115 G. Goossens, *Hierapolis de Syrie*, Louvain 1943.
116 H. Seyrig, 'Le Monnayage de Hierapolis de Syrie a l'epoque d'Alexandre', *Revue Numismatique* 11, 1971, 11–21; both Sidon and Arados maintained monarchies for another fifty years or more after Alexander.
117 Lucian, *De Dea Syra,* 17–23 – misunderstood as the wife of an Assyrian king.
118 Goossens, *Hierapolis*, 12.
119 P. Bilde, 'Atargatis/Dea Syria: Hellenisation of Her Cult in the Hellenistic-Roman Period?', in P. Bilde (ed.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Aarhus 1990, 151–187; see also N. Belayche, '"Dea Syriae Sacrum", la romanite des cults "orientaux"', *Revue historique* 302, 2010, 565–592.
120 *IG* IX 1(2), 99–110.
121 *IG* II(2), 1337
122 Horig, 1567, assuming Aphrodite Ourania is also Atargatis.
123 *IG* XII, 3.188
124 *SEG* XXXIV, 1984, 885 + XXXIII, 863.
125 *SEG* XXXIV, 1984, 684.
126 *SEG* XLIII, 1993, 435.
127 *SEG* XLVIII, 1998, 736; *SEG* XLIX, 1999, 681.
128 Pausanias VII, 26.3.
129 *I. Smyrna* 735; Goossens, *Hierapolis*, 62; at Urfa (Edessa), the pool beside the mosque is still inhabited by protected fish. The fish are fed by the townspeople, and are consequently both numerous and greedy.
130 P. Lambrechts and P. Noyen, 'Recherches sur le culte d'Atargatis dans le monde Grecque', *Le Nouvelle Clio* 6, 1954, 127–150; Goossens, *Hierapolis*.
131 *CIL* XI 6099 (*ILS* 4178); *AE* 1989, 192.
132 And perhaps of the joint cult of the Jupiters of Doliche and Heliopolis at Carnuntum.
133 Tinh, *Culte*, 19–23.
134 *CIL* IX, 4187.
135 *IG* XI 9.6.
136 In the Vatican Museum, reproduced by L.-P. Berg, *Corpus Cultus Deae Syriae*, Leiden 1972, frontispiece.
137 Suetonius, *Nero*, 56.
138 *AE* 1984, 747, 748.
139 *Eastern Cults* VII, 1.
140 *AE* 1995, 1343; *SEG* XLVI, 1996.
141 *SEG* XXX, 1980, 974.
142 *Eastern Cults*, VI I, 2.
143 D. Tudor, 'Les Syriens en Dacie Inferieure', *AAAS* 21, 1971, 71–76 at 73; *AE* 1960, 226; *AE* 1944, 50; Horig, *ANRW*, II, 17.3, 1573.
144 *AE* 1937, 133 and AE 1982, 803.
145 *AE* 2004, 814.
146 *RIB* 1.1792.
147 *RIB* 1.1791.
148 *RIB* 1.726.
149 P. L. Gatier, 'Monuments du Culte "Dolichenus" en Cyrrestique', *Syria* 75, 1998, 161–169.
150 J. Wagner, 'Neue denkwaler aus Doliche', *Bonner Jahrbucher* 182, 1982, 133–166.
151 G. Bunnens, 'The Storm God in Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia from Hadad of Aleppo to Jupiter Dolichenus', in M. Hutter and S. Hutter-Braunsar (eds.), *Offizielle Religion, locale Kulte und individualle Religionitat*, AOAT 318, 2004, 57–81.

152 P.R.S. Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium* BC *at Deve Huyuk near Carchemish Salvaged by T.E. Lawrence and C.L. Woolley in 1913*, BAR S 87, Oxford 1980.
153 P.R.S. Moorey, 'Iranian Troops at Deve Huyuk in Syria in the Earlier Fifth Century BC', *Levant* 7, 1975, 108–117.
154 S. Saglan, 'Karaman Musezi'nde Bulunar Bir grup Muhir Baskisi', *Anadolu/Anatolia* 34, 2008, 77–96.
155 On the significance of this see my *Seleukid Cities of Syria*, 39–47.
156 Grainger, *Cities of Seleukid Syria*.
157 The excavators have claimed to have located the Hellenistic temple, but their evidence is disputable; as at Heliopolis/Baalbek the Hellenistic temple was probably demolished to make way for a grander Roman version: the cult at Doliche was no doubt now much wealthier.
158 L.J.F. Keppie, 'Legions of the East from Augustus to Trajan,' in P. Freeman and D. Kennedy (eds.), *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, BAR S 297, Oxford 1986, 411–429.
159 This brief period of Commagenean control is the source of some confusion in modern accounts, so that Dolichenos is often referred to as a Commagenean god; but the Commagenean kings ruled at Doliche for no more than half a century, or less; it was a Syrian city before and after and Dolichenus was a Syrian god. There are, however, ancient references to Dolichenus as *deus Commagene*.
160 Reports are in *Kazi Sonuclari Toplantisi* by M. Blomel and E. Winter from 2008 on, and in *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* before then.
161 This is discussed, though in a way which is skewed by the requirements of her network theory, by A. Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire, the Spread of New Ideas*, Cambridge 2013, chapter 3.
162 An inscription said to come from the barracks of the *equites singulares* on the Esquiline is sometimes included as the earliest dated example from Europe (of AD 92); however, it is recorded only by the suspected forger Ligorio, and must be discarded: *CCID* 434 = *CIL* VI(2), 422*; see E. Zappata, 'Les divinites dolicheniennes et les sources epigraphiques latines', in G. M. Bellilli and U. Bianchi (eds.), *Orientalia Sacra Urbis Romae, Dolichena et Heliopolitana*, Roma 1996, 87–255.
163 Africa: *CIL* VIII, 2680, *CCID* 620 (Lambaesis); Pannonia: *CCID* 275, 227, Merlat 74, 121, *Selem* VI.2, *AE* 1936, 132; Rome (A.D. 150): *CCID* 356, 357, Merlat 176; Antoninus Pius: *AE* 1998, 1156 (Balaklava, Crimea), *CCID* 345, 346 (Hotzendorf and Virunum, Noricum, possibly); *CCID* 485, Merlat 175 (Serviodunum, Raetia); *CCID* 564, Merlat 274; *RIB* I.1330 (Benwell, Britannia); *AE* 2004, 1367 (Dorylaion, Asia Minor).
164 A. Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London 1974, 96–98, for the strategy involved in the forts along that road.
165 D. Vuckovic-Todorivic, in *Starinar* IV, 15–16, 1966, 173ff; Mocsy, *Pannonia*, 256; inscriptions at *CCID* 90, 91, 95; *AE* 1967, 336, and 1968, 45.
166 A. R. Birley, *Hadrian, the Restless Emperor*, London 1997, 169, 222–223.
167 *CIL* VIII 10296.
168 It is, in fact, only an inference that a temple existed: the inscription is on a substantial stone block which has been interpreted as part of the architrave of a building – and since the inscription mentioned Jupiter Dolichenus, a temple is assumed; the actual building has not been found.
169 Sex. Iulius Maior's career, it must be emphasised, shows absolutely no earlier connection with either Syria or Jupiter Dolichenus; Anna Collar in *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire*, implies a connection, at least on her map on page 125, but this cannot be documented; *PIR* I 397.
170 Carnuntum: *CCID* 217 (= *AE* 1936, 132); Praetorium Latobicorum: *CCID* 275.
171 *CCID* 356 and 357.
172 *CCID* 373, 374, 375, and 381; the elaborate organisation of this Dolichenum has been thought to be the norm for the rest of the empire, but there is little or no indication of such a system in any Dolichenum outside Rome.

173 O. Stoll, 'The Religions of the Armies', in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Oxford 2007, 451–476.
174 He was also a descendant in some way a descendant of the Pontic kings: Halfmann, *Senatoren*, no. 54.
175 Pointed out by Stoll, 'Religion of the Armies'.
176 *AE* 2004, 1387, dated to 'before 158'.
177 *ZPE* 194, 2015.
178 *CCID* 608, from Villadecanos; 609, from Saldanha, an altar set up by a veteran of the VII *Gemina.*
179 *CCID* 43; two other examples have been found in unknown places in 'Asia Minor' (*CCID* 44, 45); the proximity to Syria may well mean that these were more Syrian than anything else.
180 *CCID* 595 (Amiens), 597 (Lezoux), 598 (Arguilly), 599 (Martigny); bronze statuettes have been found at Mas Desports (*CCID* 600) and at an unknown place in Belgica (*CCID* 603); all of these, of course, like the statuette from the harbour, are eminently portable, hence the importance of the Rhone-Seine distribution.
181 *CCID* 602; Moore, 'Distribution of Oriental Cults'.
182 *CCID* 596.
183 *AE* 1984, 628.
184 *CCID* 298, 299, 301, 304, 307, 311, 313, 314, 316.
185 *CCID* 445, 446.
186 *CIL* VIII 2680 = *CCID* 620.
187 *CIL* XIII, 8201; *CCID* 547.
188 *CCID* 87; *CIL* III, 11137–11139; *AE* 1974, 496; *AE* 1982, 74; M. Mirkovic, 'L. Marius Perpetuus, Consularis', *Ziva Antika* 27, 1977, 443–448.
189 There are two further possible cases: *CCID* 278 is uncertainly understood, but might name a consular, L. Aelius Veranus, at Aquae Balisses in Pannonia Superior; a prefect of the Ravenna fleet is named on inscription supposed to come from Ravenna, but it is only recorded by 'the notorious falsifier, Ligorius': *CIL* XI 6 = *CCID* 456. Neither of these can be safely included here.
190 This is noted in Beard et al., *Religions of Rome*, 291; the senatorial absence applies to other 'oriental cults' as well, but only, it seems, at Rome.
191 *CCID* 630, from Lambaesis in Africa, and *CCID* 342, from Virunum in Noricum, both dated to 'the second half of the third century'; *RIB* 3.3299 (= *AE* 2005, 923) from Chesters on Hadrian's Wall.
192 *CCID* 111.
193 This is Michael P. Spiedel's theory, in *The Worship of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Roman Army*, Leiden 1978.
194 Hilali, 'La mentalite religieux', 3, 5, 6, 7 (Lambaesis, 'second century').
195 *CCID* 221, 223, 222 (Carnuntum 183, 180–183, 'second century'); 282 (Poetovio, 189); 253 (Brigetio, 'second century').
196 *CCID* 346 (Hotzendorf, 'mid-second century'); 345, 330 (Virunum, 'mid-second century', 189).
197 *CCID* 151 (Apulum, Antoninus Pius); 138 (Domnesti, 167–180); 181 (Mychkovo, 'second century').
198 *CCID* 536 (Oberburg, 191); 539 (Pforzheim, 185–187); 517, 518, 520 (Nida/Heddernheim, 'second century').
199 *CCID* 564 (Condercum/Benwell, Antoninus Pius); 577 (Voreda/Plumpton Wall, between 120 and 160).
200 *AE* 1998, 1156 (Balaclava, Antoninus Pius).
201 Collar, *Networks*, note 13.
202 References to be supplied as these are discussed.
203 *CCID* 61; *AE* 1998, 1144.

204 *CCID* 60, 62, 64, 75; *AE* 1998, 1143.
205 L. Balla, 'Les Syriens et le Chute de Jupiter Dolichenus dans le Region du Danube', *Acta Classica Universita Schientiarum Debrecen* 12, 1976, 61–68.
206 *CCID* 104, 112, 115; *AE* 2004, 1313.
207 *CCID* 154, 152, 148; *AE* 2004, 1222.
208 *CCID* 54, 50, 51; Merlat 8.
209 *CCID* 123, 124.
210 *CCID* 207; this man may be identified with M. Aurelius Apollinaris recorded on a separate stone and identified as a decurion of the *municipium* of Mursa (*CCID* 208).
211 *CCID* 185.
212 *CCID* 234, 229, 221.
213 *CCID* 266, 269, 239.
214 *CCID* 480, 525.
215 *CCID* 550.
216 *AE* 1999, 1784.
217 *CCID* 464, 463.
218 *CCID* 363.
219 *CCID* 371, 364, 381, 374, and 376.
220 *CCID* 409.
221 *CCID* 405, 379.
222 *CCID* 428.
223 Juvenal, of course, had been complaining of this at the beginning of the second century.
224 *CCID* 89 has a reproduction of the plan; *CCID* 90 has a list of the contents.
225 *CCID* 290–319 and 485.
226 *CCID* 451, 453.
227 A. Birley and A. Birley, 'A New Dolichenum Inside the Third Century Fort at Vindolanda', in M. Blomer and A. Walter (eds.), *Iuppiter Dolichenus*, Tubingen 2012, 231–257; Balaklava: *AE* 1998, 1156.
228 Speidel, *Worship*.
229 A. Maricq (ed. and trans.), 'Res Gestae Divi Saporis', *Syria* 35, 1958, 245–260; quoted in M. H. Dodgson and S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, A.D. 226–363, a Documentary History*, London 1991, 50.
230 Libanius, *Orations* 24, 18 and 15, 16; Ammianus Marcellinus, 23.5.3; G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton, NJ 1961.
231 Maricq, 'Res Gestae', quoted in Dodgson and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 57. The latter also quote many of the often very vague comments by later authors, which provide no specific information.
232 *RIB* 3.3299 (= *AE* 2005, 923).
233 *CCID* 630; Hilali, 'La Mentalite religieux', only dates this to the second or third century; Le Bohec, *Troisieme Legion Auguste*, puts it at 'perhaps before 238'.
234 *CCID* 342.
235 *CCID* 577; see also Speidel, *Worship*, 53 – but his theory that the worship ended after 260 militates against his accepting any later dates.
236 *CCID* 134 (Certia), AE 1771, 381 (Ampelum), AE 2001, 1707 (Porolissus) are all of the reign of Gordian III; AE 2001, 1706 (Porolissus) is 'after 238', and *CCID* 131 (Samum) is dated 243.
237 *CCID* 34 and 33 respectively.
238 *CCID* 383, 384.
239 *CCID* 77.
240 *CCID* 550.
241 I. Tolh, 'Destruction of the Sanctuaries of Iuppiter Dolichenus at the Rhine and in the Danube Region (235–238)', *AAASH* 25, 1973, 109–116.

242 Herodian 7.3.5; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* 'The Two Maximini' 19.4; neither of these historians is in any way reliable in detail, and their comments on this matter are in lists of the usual sort of unpleasantness which they assumed angry military men do. Their words are not specific evidence of anything.
243 Summarised by P. Parker, *The Empire Stops Here*, London 2009, 149.
244 H. Schoenberger, 'The Roman Frontier in Germany: An Archaeological Survey,' *Journal of Roman Studies* 59, 1969, 144–197 at 174–176.
245 *CCID* 90, a list of the individual items found inside the Dolichenum.
246 *CCID* 232; the other so dated was at Birdoswald on Hadrian's Wall; if two examples are thought very few, recall that Maximinus' reign was only three years.
247 *CCID* 290–319 gives details of the finds at this site.
248 Tolh's description (note 91).
249 *AE* 1994, 128.
250 *RIU* 1104 (= Fitz 90); recently revised and dated to 198–199: *AE* 2009, 1095.
251 *RIU* 1098.
252 Bricoult, *Les Dieux de l'Orient*, referring to *AE* 1925, 125, 1992, 1850 and 1933, 47.
253 A. Garcia y Bellido, *Les Religions Orientales dans l'Espagne Romaine*, Leiden 1967.
254 Tinh, *Culte* 1 = *CIS* II, 1.158.
255 Tinh, *Culte* 2 = *CIS* II, 1.157.
256 Tinh, *Culte* 3–7; *AE* 2001, 843 and 844; AE 1994, 422 and 423.
257 Tinh, *Culte*, 15.
258 Ibid., 16.
259 Ibid., 18.
260 *SEG* XXXI, 1981, 889 bis.
261 *AE* 1983, 73; R. Turcan, *Les cultes orientales dans le Vallee du Rhone*, Leiden 1971.
262 *RIU* 1053.
263 *RIB* 2.2423–5.
264 *AE* 1994, 756; *IG* XIV, 419–420.
265 Garcia y Bellido, *Les Religions Orientales*.
266 M. M. Mitchell and F. M. Young (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 1, *Origins to Constantine*, Cambridge 2006, is a basic discussion, if not always very critical; other studies which underlie this brief survey include R. L. Mullen, *The Expansion of Chrisitianity, a Gazetter of Its First Three Centuries*, 2004, and R. Stack, *The Rise of Christianity*, Princeton, NJ 1996.
267 There are several examples of this confusion in the various volumes of *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* – where they are taken to be Jewish.
268 *Fasti Sacerdotium*, 15–16.
269 *Acts* 11.26.
270 Suetonius, *Claudius* 25, *Nero* 16; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44; Dio Cassius 67.14.
271 Pliny the Younger, *Epistles*, 10.96–97.
272 Quoted in Eusebius, *Ecclesiatical History*, IV.9.
273 The main source for this is late and Christian: John Malalas 11.10 and 15, a notoriously unreliable source.
274 K. Lake (ed.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (Loeb Library) 2.312–345, quoted in J. Stevenson (ed.), *A New Eusebius, Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*, new ed. rev. W.H.C. Frend, London 1987, 23–30; this is clearly a later account, elaborated on the basis of a contemporary Christian narrative; yet the killing did take place; the date is unclear, either c.155 or c.166.
275 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V.1–3.
276 Tertullian, *Apology*; Carthage's Christians were fuelled by some of the most unpleasant martyrdoms on record, above all by that of Vibia Perpetua, her slave Felicitas, and the presbyter Saturus; for a modern version of the exultation involved, see W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church*, 2nd ed., London 1982 – 'momentous events', and 'her natural exaltation' – 79–81; for a corrective see B. D. Shaw 'The Passion of Perpetua', *Past and Present* 139, 1993, 3–45.

277 *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 1, 386–391.
278 Cyprian, *de Lapsis* 8.9. This led to an intense dispute in the African Church over how the 'lapsed' should be treated.
279 F. van der Meer and C. Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian Church*, 2nd ed., London 1966, map 22.
280 Tertullian, *Apology* 37.4–5.
281 See the numerous cases detailed in F. R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianisation, c. 370–529*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., Leiden 1995.
282 C. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*, London 1981, 48–50; H. Williams, *Christianity in Early Britain*, Oxford 1912.
283 Pliny the Younger, *Epistles*, 10.96.
284 For discussions of the survival of paganism see R. MacMullen, *Christianising the Roman Empire*, New Haven, CT 1984, with some relevant remarks on the 'silencing' of the pagans, or P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, London 1971; most books on 'Late Antiquity' discuss the issue.
285 R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, London 1986, 30–31, and his notes.
286 The title of a book by Desmond O'Grady, London 1991.
287 Old rituals were revived, temples rebuilt, the imperial cult publicly discouraged at first but later promoted; see A.H.M. Jones, *Augustus*, London 1970 chapter 13; many more recent biographies ignore this activity, or downplay it; for the imperial cult see the documents collected in V. Ehrenberg and A.H.M. Jones (eds.), *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1955.
288 M. Icks, *The Crimes of Elagabalus*, London 2011; E. Cizek, *L'Empereur Aurelien et son Temps*, Paris 1994, 175–183; the temples of these emperors in Rome – both of them huge constructions – are noted in Beard et al., *Religions of Rome*, 255–256, 258–259.
289 Diocletian's religious reforms are largely ignored, probably because historians know well enough that the 'victory' of Christianity was just around the chronological corner; see S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*, London 1985, 153–163, one of the few studies to pay any serious attention to the issue.
290 For the spread of the imperial cult see D. Fishwick, 'The Development of Provincial Ruler-Worship in the Western Roman Empire', *ANRW* II 16.2, 1978, 1201–1253.

7 Civilians

The record of civilian Syrians – that is, in this case, non-military and non-religious Syrians – in the empire outside their homeland is a great deal sparser than it is with soldiers and the Syrian gods. Civilians were apparently much less inclined to spend their time and money on memorialising themselves and their activities. The 'epigraphic habit' was nevertheless sufficiently ingrained in Roman society that there remain a worthwhile number of records to be collected and studied. Their distribution through the empire also provides a contrast with the military-religious complex, and at the same time, is a mirror of it. That is, the civilian epigraphic distribution is a useful complement to the far more numerous records of soldiers and Syrian gods.

To begin with, it is worth noting that there is plenty of evidence, of all types, for Syrians active throughout the Mediterranean world in the millennium before the Roman arrival in Syria. The Phoenicians were, of course, active from Cyprus to Spain and beyond from about 1000 BC, with Carthage being their most notable colonising achievement.[1] For the Hellenistic period, when the Phoenician presence was commercial rather than military or colonising, there are records of Phoenician merchants in Egypt and in the Aegean, just as there are records of Jews in Egypt and in Asia Minor, and Carthaginians in Spain, Sicily, and Sardinia. So there was a tradition of emigration upon which the Syrians enclosed in the Roman system could draw on, and which could be resumed and revived. Yet these earlier Syrians did not remain Syrians, but became instead Carthaginians or Spaniards, or merged into Aegean society – or they returned to their homelands. Assimilation or return was the pattern before the establishment of the empire.

It will be convenient to take each major region of the empire in turn, moving from southeast to northwest.

I. Egypt

Egypt, of course, was a country with which Syrians had had strong connections since before the origins of agriculture, with constant movements of population to and fro between the two countries. In the Ptolemaic period Palestine and Phoenicia were parts of the Ptolemaic province of Koile Syria, and movement from there to Egypt was relatively easy, and it was in that time that Jews had

become a large part of the population of Alexandria and spread to other parts of the Nile Valley. Ptolemy VI had permitted the establishment of a Jewish temple at Leontopolis as a rival to that at Jerusalem, as a political riposte to the defeat of the Jewish rebellion under the Maccabees by the Seleukids.[2] A record of other Syrians living and working in Egypt was compiled some years ago,[3] and it includes a wide variety of people, and no doubt other instances have come to light since. Many of the people involved appear to have been farmers or slaves; they are spread throughout Egypt, from Alexandria and the Delta to the Thebaid, and the dating of the records – mainly, of course, papyri derived from administrative records – implies that Syrians were more or less continually moving into Egypt throughout the Roman (and Byzantine) periods, though only in a minor way. There are even four 'Syrian villages' (*Suron kome*) in the country.[4]

The papyrus record provides a much greater quantity and quality of detail from Egypt than there is from any other land, but it is necessary to avoid the assumption that conclusions drawn from Egyptian records can be applied to the rest of the empire. The country, its population, its gods, its government, the living conditions, were all different from other regions. It is reasonable to assume that the presence of considerable numbers of Syrians in Egypt is a unique phenomenon also.

That being said, it is evident from the papyri, many of which are precisely dated, that the migration of Syrians to Egypt was a more or less continuous activity throughout the Roman period, as it had been earlier, though in the Roman period, it was on a relatively small scale. It may be assumed that the label of 'Syrian' applies mainly to those people who were actually imported from Syria, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, though it may also be that the second and even third generations could retain the description of 'Syrian'. In some cases '*Syros*' was also a personal name. It is also noticeable that 'Syrian' is almost the only geographical description of Syrians, and very few of the records cite the person's precise origin within Syria, in contrast to Syrians in other regions, where the home city is more often indicated; on the other hand, quite often a location inside Egypt is stated as home or at least as a residence. I conclude therefore that many people who were designated as 'Syrians' were in fact Egyptian-born, and that the record of the apparent immigration from Syria which appears in the documents is somewhat exaggerated.

Nevertheless, it is still a record of the movement of people from Syria to Egypt. Villages designated as 'Syrian village' imply a settlement at that site in which at least a large minority of the inhabitants came originally from Syria. This movement is much more likely to have taken place during Hellenistic rather than Roman times, for then Palestine and Phoenicia were united politically with Egypt under the kings from Ptolemy I to Ptolemy V (that is, from 300 to 195 BC), and then again briefly in the 140s BC, and fragments were included in the territories held briefly by Cleopatra VII. The takeover of Palestine and Phoenicia by Antiochos III in the Fifth Syrian War (202–195 BC) seems not to have been vindictive enough to drive many people out, though no doubt some did leave, and the conquest was sufficiently difficult and complex that some people were surely caught with the 'wrong' loyalties at times.

The prime target for Jews and presumably for other Syrians in moving to Egypt in the Hellenistic period was, of course, Alexandria, and a large proportion of the population of that city was Jewish by the second century BC; they were concentrated in two of the five quarters of the city, and constituted up to a quarter of its population.[5] A secondary target for migrants was the preceding city-capital of Egypt, Memphis. There are records of people from Syria settling in the city as early as the fifteenth century BC, and when their relatives visited the city a thousand years after that, the Phoenicians were living in section of the city called the Tyrian Camp.[6] It is as Phoenicians and Jews that the Syrian migrants are generally classified in the city, but here they must be regarded mainly as Syrians. Records are somewhat less explicit during the Roman period, and the city went into a long slow decline which will have made it somewhat less attractive as a place for migrants to go to, especially when compared with Alexandria, but it is clear that Syrians had made a contribution – economic, social, and in some ways religious – to the life of the city.[7]

A further consideration is that a fair number of those who were listed are described as local officials. There is, for example, a '*Suros strategos*' at Alexandria in the third century AD, and a *bouleuteros* of Philadelphia called Aurelius Suros is recorded at Ptolemais in 295.[8] Such men in such offices are unlikely to be immigrants. Similarly, the Suros son of Petesouchos, who is described as *presbyteros* in 156 at Archelais, had a father with an Egyptian name;[9] these cases rather suggest a long domestication of the family in Egypt. And yet, even discounting these examples, there are clear cases of continuing movement out of Syria into Egypt; for example, there is the case of a Syrian slave girl who was imported by an Arab merchant, probably in the second century AD. She had been brought from Eleutheropolis in Palestine and was sold first at Pelusion, at the entrance to Egypt, and then again at Oxyrhynchus.[10] And there is a record of a group of Palmyrene merchants at Coptos in Middle Egypt, who had a dedication inscribed; they were probably involved in the Red Sea trade, of which Coptos was a 'port of the desert' to which goods were transported from Berenike on the Red Sea coast for further transportation down the Nile.[11]

The record of Syrians in Egypt is thus not only misleading in a wider imperial context, but is distinctly ambiguous as well. At the same time it is difficult to detect that the Syrians who arrived during the Roman period – generally as individuals rather than groups (ignoring the army for the moment) – had any effect on the surrounding Egyptian society. That society had already been subjected to the full blast of Greek culture for three centuries and more before the Roman takeover, and had remained largely true to its Egyptian self all through; the slow seepage of a few Syrians into the country would have no real effect.

To this, of course, the Jews had a different history. From the second century BC onwards those in Alexandria in particular were subject to increasing forms of discrimination and suffered repeated attacks. There was a major crisis in their relations with the surrounding mainly Greek population in AD 38, which led to a virtual civil war in the city and large-scale killing.[12] There had been several supposed earlier incidents of riots involving Jews and Greeks in Alexandria, which

in fact are difficult to accept in detail, though the very fact that such stories were recorded later suggest that relations had always been poor.[13] Not surprisingly the Maccabean revolt in Palestine had had repercussions in Egypt; and the great Jewish revolt in AD 66–73 similarly[14] – such repercussions involving massacres, riots, and usually governmental tergiversation. In this case, however, the trouble spread to the countryside where several refugees of the terrorist type had fled from Judaea; they were sufficiently dangerous to their Jewish hosts that many of them were eventually surrendered to the authorities, but not before their campaign of murder had claimed more Jewish lives than Roman.[15]

The end result of this social conflict came in 115–117, with the rebellion of the Jews in Egypt which so disrupted Trajan's campaign against the Parthian Empire. This began in the usual way with riots in Alexandria but continued with a much more vicious conflict in the city than usual, which resulted in the deaths or expulsion of the great majority of the Jewish population; and unusually the fighting continued in the rest of Egypt, in a fashion which can only be described as guerrilla warfare tempered with terrorism. Again the result was a massive reduction in the proportion of the population of Egypt which was Jewish.[16]

II. Asia Minor

In the rest of the empire outside Egypt the record of Syrians is mainly epigraphic, and that in many cases means epitaphs. Asia has produced the largest number of the various records outside Egypt, but they can be somewhat ambiguous. They are also largely from cities rather than the rural records of the Egyptian papyri. Apart from the usual epitaphs, there are also two lists containing the names of several Syrians. In all cases, in direct contrast to the Egyptian records, the Syrians in Asia were meticulous in recording their Syrian origins, precisely to their city.

First, the epitaphs. There are two from Ephesos, one of a trierarch of the Syrian fleet, C. Iulius Hilarus, who may or may not himself be a Syrian;[17] the second records a married couple, both of whom came from Berytus, named Asia and Ktetos.[18] The date assigned to these records is no more precise than 'imperial', but the first three centuries of the first millennium AD seems a reasonable interpretation. At Smyrna, another port, is the epitaph of a lady, Oinanthe daughter of Demetrios, who came from 'Antioch-by-Daphne', and whose memorial is dated to the first or second century.[19] From Iasos farther south are three epitaphs, one of Agathon of Apamaea (presumably, though not necessarily, the city of that name in Syria) and two of men from Seleukeia, Sosibios and Ariston, the second defined as a metic – a resident foreigner – again it may be assumed that Seleukeia-in-Pieria is meant.[20] No dates are available, but 'imperial' would probably apply. Inland, from Stratonikeia, is the epitaph of Agathopos of Berytos,[21] and from Kibyra, the record, for a change, is of a man who is not named but who inscribed his gratitude to Asklepios and to a doctor (also not named) after having been cured; he was from Laodikeia, though this may be from the Asia Minor city of that name.[22]

Iasos and Smyrna also produced the two lists mentioned before. The first is a list of the subscribers or participants in a *choregia*; the second is of another subscription list, though the purpose is not stated. The *choregia* list from Iasos includes six named men from Antioch, of whom four were metics, two from Apamaea (one a metic), two from Laodikeia (one a metic), and one man from Jerusalem.[23] The inclusion of these men from the great cities of north Syria is confirmation of a sort of the epitaphs from that same small city, which name other men from exactly those cities. The list from Smyrna is unspecific as to its purpose, but it is similarly meticulous in recording the origins of the people listed. Most are recorded as from Apamaea (six names), and there are two from Laodikeia, and one each from Antioch and Gaza. In a second inscription, which seems to refer to the same subscription, two Antiochenes are named. This is different from the *choregia* list, in that several wives or other women are listed, and one of the women mentioned also included her children (unnamed).[24] It is curious that in each case there is just one person named from the Palestine area – Jerusalem and Gaza – where all the rest were from north Syria.

The presence of Syrians in this highly commercial region is hardly surprising, and they were the successors to the similar groups whose presence is recorded from the Hellenistic period at, for example, Delos, when that island was the commercial centre of the Aegean. The fact that several of those named at Iasos are described as metics also suggests that they, and the others without such description, were probably merchants. Hellenistic records are fewer than those of the Roman period, and it was only fairly late and briefly that the cities, which had been ruled by the Ptolemies for much of the time since 300 BC, became part of the Seleukid kingdom; that is, only for a short time in the reign of Antiochos III (about 205 to 190) were they under Seleukid rule. For the next half century, they were either under Attalid rule or were independent, and from 130 BC or so they were Roman. Neither under Ptolemaic nor Attalid rule would subjects of the Seleukid kingdom be particularly welcome in the cities. It seems therefore most likely that any movement of Syrians into these cities happened in the Roman period – though, of course, the epigraphic records are not of old immigrant families, but of individuals who had moved to Asia from Syria during their own lifetimes.

This concentration, if these relatively few instances can be so termed, of Syrians in Asia Minor living in the coastal cities and nearby, can be added to the examples of Jews living mainly in inland cities such as Sardis, which has been dealt with in the chapter on religion. These Jews however were of course also civilians and should be recalled here.

III. Greece and Thrace

In Greece, Athens had been the home-in-exile at times of two Seleukid princes and future kings (Antiochos IV and Antiochos VIII) and was always a target for merchants, from Syria or elsewhere. This larger history, however, was not reflected in the origins of the Syrians named in the Roman period. Three epitaphs from Athens of the imperial period name people from Antioch; one other

names two men, Jews, from Caesarea in Palestine.[25] This is a very small number from a city which retained and exploited the habit of producing inscriptions more than most. Just to confirm the Antiochene perspective, a record of victory at the Mousia at Thespiai names another Antiochene, M. Aurelius Septimios Nemesianos Atigregides.[26] From Hierapytna in Crete, however, is an epitaph recording Diogenes from Hierapolis and his wife Aristokleia from Sidon (Diogenes' origin is assumed to be the Syrian Hierapolis because of his wife's origin – not a particularly safe assumption, perhaps.)[27] From Nikopolis, the new 'victory-city' founded by Augustus after 30 BC, is an inscription of the 'Gazans of Nikopolis', in a dedication to Augustus (who else?).[28] It is of interest that Gaza, which had suffered badly in the Maccabean wars, was now populous enough to dispatch a group of (presumed) merchants to the new city in Epeiros. From Kallipolis in Thrace is another epitaph of an historian, T. Claudius Andronikos of Laodikeia (again the city is unspecified but for that very reason may be assumed to be Syrian).[29] This meagre record is perhaps a sign of the lack of importance of Greece in the Roman period, and so of the unwillingness of Syrians to go there.

IV. The northern frontier

There is a thin scattering of records of Syrian civilians in the Balkan region north of Greece and along the frontier as far as the North Sea. A Sidonian lady, Ampliata, paid for a statue at Tomis in Moesia on the Black Sea coast – Ovid's exile city.[30] From Troesmis on the Danube in Moesia Superior comes the epitaph of T. Claudius Priscus, who came originally from Emesa.[31] Farther west, at Solus in Pannonia, is the epitaph of another lady, Claudia Monna, from Nikopolis in Syria; she died aged twenty-two late in the first century and was buried by her husband;[32] at Veszprom in Pannonia Superior a freedman, M. Licinius Agathon, originally from Antioch, was commemorated on an epitaph along with his two, presumably successive, wives; since they were both called Licinia, it would seem that he had acquired them as slaves, and then freed them before marrying them.[33] And at Trier in Gallia Belgica, Eustatius (*cives Surus*) was buried; his epitaph was inscribed on the back of an earlier one.[34]

This thin series of commemorations of civilians hardly says much about the influence of Syrians in the empire, but it does point to two things: first, as in Asia Minor, but in contrast to Egypt, these Syrians tended to remember and proclaim their precise origins in Syria, though this is not particularly surprising: second, it was clearly easy for people to move about and settle in new homes at large distances from their origins, as was suggested also by the Egyptian evidence, and this was a major factor in Roman imperial society.

V. Italy

Rome has, unsurprisingly, produced a considerable crop of inscriptions recording the presence of Syrians in the city. One is dated to the reign of either Augustus or Tiberius, though the precise date of 14 or 13 BC has been suggested.

It is an honorary inscription by a group of Damascene envoys for M. Licinius Crassus Frugi, who was consul in that time – hence the dating – and who had presumably assisted them while in the city.[35] An embassy from Seleukeia-in-Pieria to Augustus is also recorded in an inscription, dated to AD 5 or 6; the honoured person was Augustus himself; the two men named as the originators were 'Noumenios son of Noumenios' and 'Stratos son of Stratos son of Stratos'.[36] Why these men came to Rome is not known, but they cannot have been the only envoys who went to the city, particularly early in the imperial period, when it was necessary to sort out problems and to establish a clear status for many more cities than Seleukeia and Damascus. But these are only the record of the temporary residences of Syrians in the city; the envoys would soon go home with their news.

From Rome we also have some written evidence, referring to the more permanent residents in the city. Above all there are the ambiguous references to Jews and Syrians by Juvenal, exhibiting his unpleasant dislike of foreigners of any sort – but it is not ambiguous in the slightest that there are large numbers of people from Syria (as well as other parts of the empire) living in the city. Juvenal's references can be taken as clear evidence of the presence of Syrians in the city, which is not surprising, and yet, as epigraphic evidence indicates, Juvenal only included references to those he disliked.[37]

Residents of a different sort are marked by their epitaphs. From Apamaea, specifically from the village of Magarata, came Diogenes son of Iamb[l]ichos, who was buried in Rome.[38] Again without any surprise, there are records of Syrians at Puteoli apart from those which have been already mentioned as being connected with the worship of Syrian gods, from Nabataea, Berytus, and other places. There were the 'Tyrians at Puteoli', of whom five are named, four recorded as having spoken at a meeting of the club, and one who died in the town; the date of this last is the later second century, and that of the collective inscription is 174.[39]

VI. Africa and Spain

Two epitaphs of Syrians are from cities in North Africa. Two Antiochenes are recorded at Lambaesis, where one buried the other.[40] At Volubilis in Mauretania an epitaph records the death of Domitia Syrophoenix, whose name demands a Syrian origin.[41] The older connections of Carthage and other North African cities with Syria, specifically with Tyre, Carthage's mother city, which were certainly active in Alexander's time, were surely largely destroyed by the Roman conquest and destruction of Carthage in 146, but other cities, notably Utica, remained in existence. One might have expected, nevertheless, rather more evidence of a Syrian connection than has been located in North Africa.

Three inscriptions from Spain are similarly well scattered: a fragment of an inscription from Malaga on the south coast mentions the 'Syrians of Malake', presumably another club of people far from their homeland, who interestingly used the Greek transcription of the former Phoenician name for the city, while

inscribing in Latin;[42] in the far northwest of the peninsula two more Antiochenes are named on an epitaph, where one buried the other.[43] Off Minorca a cargo ship sank; it was carrying 'goods of a mainly Oriental origin', including a bronze plaque on which 'Kastor Kointos son of Andibelos' was named; he was from Heliopolis (Baalbek), and again there is the cosmopolitan mixture of names: Greek (Kastor), Roman (Kointos, i.e., Quintus), and Syrian Aramaic (Andebelos), which was clearly characteristic of Roman Syria.[44] There were old connections between Phoenicia and Spain, dating back to the Bronze Age, but, again as with North Africa, it would seem that the Roman conquest may have disrupted such ancient connections. The discovery of the Minorcan ship, however, would suggest that the mercantile links had continued, or had revived in the imperial period.

VII. Britannia

Britain is, curiously, given the distances involved, the source of a considerable group of records of Syrians; this is especially odd when the thin scattering of records from Greece to the North Sea is taken into account – there are as many such records in Britain as there are in Italy. They are also largely concentrated in the north and on Hadrian's Wall, though one is from London, the gravestone of a man from Antioch, but his name survives only incompletely.[45] From the Wall region are four epitaphs. One is of Barathes from Palmyra, a *vexillarius* who was buried at Corbridge; his wife Regina – his freedman and wife – was a Catuvellaunian from southern Britain, and was buried at South Shields, probably many years earlier, since Barathes lived to the age of sixty-eight.[46] He added a Palmyrene translation of her epitaph to the Latin version, which must have been difficult to arrange in Latin-inscribing Britannia. Two Syrian doctors were buried at Chesters fort. One, M. Apronianus [ ]ecio, was from Berytos;[47] the other, Antiochos, does not have an origin stated, but his name is Syrian.[48]

This collection is hardly numerous, but the higher incidence as compared with other regions, which are often of a larger size, requires an explanation. One reason must be the considerable garrison which was always present on the island, but it is probable that as good a reason is the assiduous and long-term excavations which have taken place over the last two centuries in Britain. On the other hand, the frontier area of Germany has been well searched and it has produced few Syrians, so mere research cannot altogether account for the differences.

VIII. Summary

Too many of these inscriptions are undated, or only vaguely so, which is probably a function of the 'civilian-ness' of these records, in that it was less important to refer to emperors in civilian inscriptions than in the military, which had a heavily bureaucratic tendency, which clearly rubbed off onto the soldiers, or even the religious ones. This therefore makes it impossible to discern any chronological pattern in the incidence of the Syrian civilians in the rest of the empire. On the

other hand, their insistence on naming their origins in Syria does provide the chance to discern, however insecurely, the sources of emigration from Syria.

The first thing to note is the heavy preponderance of natives of Antioch among the emigrants. Of the sixty Syrians who are specified in these records in their origins, nineteen were from Antioch, almost a third of that total. Second, taking the four great cities of north Syria as a group, thirty-nine of the sixty emigrants were from those four places (ten from Apamaea, four from Seleukeia, six from Laodikeia, plus the Antiochenes). We can say, therefore, that the civilian emigrants were mainly from the great urban centres, which would seem to be a contrast with the emigrant soldiers, who seem to have been more rural in their origins.

Calculating in a different way, seven of the cities of origin were on the Syrian coast, from Seleukeia-in-Pieria to Gaza, and eight were from cities in the inland regions, though, except for Antioch, the inland cities sent forth relatively few emigrants. Note also that the south – Palestine and Phoenicia – only dispatched fifteen people, and that the Phoenician cities were by no means prolific in their emigrants, perhaps rather surprisingly, given their maritime activity, and their record of earlier emigration. The distribution of these emigrants has already been discussed in the above account, but it is worth emphasising that Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy were by far the most popular destinations, and that a fair number of provinces have produced few or no records of having received any Syrians.

Notes

1 For the west see M. E. Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West*, trans. Mary Turton, 2nd ed., Cambridge 2001; for Carthage, of which the latest general account is R. Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed, the Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilisation*, London 2010; I included a brief survey of the Hellenistic Phoenicians overseas in *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, Oxford 1991.
2 Josephos, *BJ* 1.31–33; R. Hayward, 'The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis: A Reconsideration', *JJS* 33, 1982, 429–433; for Jews in Hellenistic Egypt, a well-investigated topic, see J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)*, California 1996, part 1.
3 G. Vaggi, 'Siria e Siri nei documenti dell'Egitto greco-romani', *Aegyptus* 17, 1937, 29–51.
4 These are in the Arsinoite and Oxyrhynchos nomes, and near Heliopolis; there was also a 'Syrian quarter' in the Arsinoite: Vaggi 31–33.
5 Josephus, *BJ* 2.495, and *Contra Apion* 2.33–36.
6 Herodotos 2.112.
7 D. J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, 2nd ed., Princeton, NJ 2012, chapter 3 on 'ethnic minorities'.
8 *P. Ross* III.4; *P. Oxy* I.43; Vaggi, 'Siria e Siri', 42, 43.
9 *P. Ryl* II.88; Vaggi, 'Siria e Siri', 42.
10 A. Benaissa, 'A Syrian Slave Girl Twice Sold in Egypt', *ZPE* 173, 2010, 175–190.
11 *AE* 1984, 923; A. Bernard, *Les ports du desert, Receuil des inscriptions grecques d'Antinooupolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Apollonopolis Parva et Apollonopolis Magna*, Paris 1884, no. 103; S. E. Sidebotham, *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route*, California 2011.
12 Philo, *In Flaccam*, and *Legatio ad Gaiam*, both contemporary with the events, if partisan; Gruen, *Diaspora*, 54–64, for a careful examination.
13 For example, III *Maccabees* and Josephus, *Contra Apion* 2.55.
14 A riot in Alexandria and 66, put down by the governor Ti. Julius Alexander, who was Jewish himself: Josephus, *BJ* 2.489–498.

15 Ibid, 2.409–410.
16 Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.90; Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.2–3; Dio Cassius 68.32 and 69.8; *HA, Hadrian* 5; a group of papyri from official sources are in *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* 409–434, and ostraka at 160–408; Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule,* 393–412.
17 *I. Ephesos* 2274 = *CIL* III.434; C. G. Starr, *The Roman Imperial Navy*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1960, 122, note 29, suggests that 'many of the sailors' of the Syrian fleet 'were Syrian'.
18 *I. Ephesos* 2215A.
19 *I. Smyrna* 890.
20 *I. Iasos* 370, 217, and 176.
21 *I. Stratonikeia* 405.
22 *I. Kibyra* 83; all these cities of origin, except Berytos and Jerusalem, are as ambiguous in their way as the Egyptian papyri: there are multiple Apamaeas and Laodikeias and Seleukeias, so the Syrian cities are not certain in these inscriptions; on the other hand, the Syrian cities with these names were the major cities, and by simply naming them without further designation it seems probable that the Syrian cities are meant to be understood.
23 *I. Iasos* 184, 188, 193, 194, 196, 199, 201, 206.
24 *I. Smyrna* 689, 690.
25 *SEG* XXXVIII, 1988, 220, 221 222; *CIJ* 715.
26 *SEG* LII, 2002, 511.
27 *SEG* XXXII, 1982, 875.
28 *SEG* XXXVI, 1986, 1987.
29 *I. Kallipolis* 17.
30 *I. Tomis* 290.
31 *CIL* III, Supp., 1.7500.
32 *AE* 2003, 1369.
33 *AE* 1999, 1247.
34 *BRGK* 17, 1927, 56.
35 *SEG* XXXIX 1989, 1066, and XLI, 1991, 868;
36 *SEG* XLI 1991, 869.
37 D. H. Braund, 'Juvenal and the East, Satire as an Historical Source', in D. H. French and C. S. Lightfoot (eds.), *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire*, BAR S553, Oxford 1989, 45–52; he includes also a couple of similar references from Martial.
38 *AE* 1982, 74.
39 *AE* 2006, 314; T. T. Tinh, *Le Culte des Divinites Orientales en Campanie*, Leiden 1972 (EPRO 27), 17; despite the inclusion of this reference in this book, it is not obvious that it was in a religious context that the 'Tyrians at Puteoli' operated, though it is perhaps very likely.
40 *CIL* VIII, 2898.
41 *ILAf* 640.
42 *CIL* II, page 251.
43 *CIL* II, 830.
44 *SEG* XXXV 1985, 1072.
45 *RIB* 1.29.
46 *RIB* 1.1171, 1065.
47 *RIB* 1.519.
48 *RIB* III 3151.

8 Concentrations

The preceding detailed surveys of armies and gods from Syria have subdivided the connections between Syria and the rest of the Roman Empire somewhat excessively, and in a way socially, into a variety of religions and many military units, plus the relatively few Syrian civilians who can be traced. It is time to consolidate the information to see just where Syrians were concentrated in those parts of the empire which they reached. This will be done by region or province with the aim of discovering the particular concentrations of influence as suggested by the concrete evidence.

I. Egypt

Egypt was a region in which it was always difficult for outside influences to have any effect. The nature of Egyptian society, with its particular language, its well-entrenched gods and temples, and its powerful priesthoods, was notably resistant to anything that threatened to disturb it – except military conquerors. But these could be ignored: in the past Egypt had shrugged off Libyan, Ethiopian, Assyrian, and Persian rule without serious difficulty and without having absorbed any noticeable foreign influences, especially as they had arrived as hostile conquerors. It had failed to escape from Greco-Macedonian rule under the Ptolemies – which had been accepted at first as a rescue from Persian rule – but not for want of trying. There had been numerous and extensive rebellions against the Ptolemies, while passive resistance ensured that, at the level of the bedrock rural society, even the Greeks had had relatively little influence. The Greek language and script were certainly used in the administration, but the Egyptian scripts – hieroglyphic and demotic – had continued in use, and there is no indication that Greek religion, for example, penetrated beyond the Greco-Egyptian elite. Indeed, in the case of religion, the opposite is the case, for it seems evident that it was the Greeks who were affected by the Egyptian country and, above all, by its religion: Sarapis and Isis had been successful adaptations of Egyptian deities which had been exported to the rest of the Mediterranean region, while the Egyptians accepted little more than Adonis and Astarte, on a very small scale, and only in the Greek cities, not in the Egyptian countryside.[1] It is noticeable that, since the Egyptian script

continued in use long into the Roman period, this also meant that there were schools, probably run by priests, in which the religion, the language, and the script were all taught.[2] The same may be said of the styles of Egyptian art, in painting, and in sculpture, both in the round and in low relief, and the Ptolemaic kings were regularly depicted in the Egyptian style.

In such circumstances it is not at all surprising to conclude that the Syrian presence in Egypt was of little account or influence, at least to the powerfully resistant Egyptians. The Syrians who had moved into Egypt, mainly it seems in the preceding Hellenistic period, were certainly commemorated as living in 'Syrian villages', but the very fact of the concentration of these people into a few villages restricted any influence they might have had on the wider society. The same may be said of the soldiers removed from Ituraea and other parts of Syria into Egypt as part of the Roman occupation and defence forces: they were socially isolated by their difference, and they were also in many ways isolated by the very fact that they were foreign soldiers – occupiers, to the Egyptians, no doubt – and by the fact that they tended to be stationed in the frontier areas, away from most of the Egyptians. The Ituraeans and the Commageneans were located in the south, their records being found at Talmis and Thebes, at the Wadi Hammamet and Koptos; the Apamaean regiment was probably in the Fayum, as was the *Damascenorum* regiment. All of these regiments were, actually, most likely spread about in detachments, and when it arrived, the *numerus* regiment of Palmyrenes was partly in the south and partly in the Fayum. This scarcely allowed much Syrian influence to pervade the surrounding Egyptian society, especially as the Fayum was heavily settled by descendants of Greek settlers and the south was always the most sturdily Egyptian of all the regions.

Several regiments were actually in Egypt only for short periods, and it was clearly necessary, given the strong resistance to any outside influences by Egyptian society, for a group to be in Egypt for a lengthy period if the men were to have any affect – but then, if the men stayed for long, they were more likely to be absorbed by Egypt than to influence it. The Roman prohibition on recruiting Egyptians into the army, including the Syrians, operated for some decades, and this kept the foreign units as foreign occupiers, and no doubt they were regarded with hostility and enmity by the Egyptians – there was thus little sign of any mutual influences and social connections. Even when the prohibition ceased to be rigorously enforced, perhaps by the second century, the army was still seen as an occupying force.

The penetration of Syrian deities into Egyptian society was similarly without any noticeable effect, and even less noticeable in itself. There was a considerable Jewish presence, particularly in Alexandria (there is little evidence for Jews elsewhere), but there is no sign that any Egyptians or Greeks adopted their faith, despite the existence for two centuries and more of an active Jewish temple at Leontopolis. (Conversion surely took place, as did Jewish apostasy, but neither is visible and probably both were hardly noticeable.) Indeed, the anti-Jewish violence of the Roman period, partly as a result of the militancy

of the Jews produced by the Maccabean rising and then by the rebellion of 66–73, saw several bloodthirsty riots in Alexandria, and a vicious Jewish rebellion in 115–117 caused very heavy Jewish (and Egyptian) casualties. This would have little effect on the surrounding population other than to stimulate it to opposition – one of the motives for the violence was theft, as ever. The Syrian religions of *Dea Syra* and Jupiter Dolichenus had no presence in Egypt at any time (except of one record of *Dea Syra* at Athribis in the Delta). A few instances of Astarte, a version of the *Dea Syra*, are known, particularly at Memphis, already from the Hellenistic period, and were largely confined to Phoenicians.[3] This was despite the considerable numbers of Syrian troops in the country, and the continued recruitment of Syrians into their units. It is known, above all from the poem by Theokritos, that there was a festival for the celebration of Adonis, but this was in Alexandria, essentially a Greek city, and was celebrated, it seems, largely by Greek women;[4] this was not the worship of a Syrian god taken up by the generality of the Egyptian population. And the evidence for both Adonis and Astarte is mainly Hellenistic, rather than of the Roman period.

The activities of Syrian civilians in Egypt similarly emphasise their isolation. Some of those who are known of were merchants operating in the Red Sea trade, that is, working in a difficult region in the eastern desert, and at a trade in which few Egyptians were involved – though this is difficult to demonstrate. They seem mainly to have been self-consciously Palmyrene, commemorating their visits by dedicating memorials to their home gods – so they earn double representation on the map, as civilians and as commemorating their Palmyrene gods. This is neither Egyptian nor Syrian influence, therefore, nor can there any influence be discerned among any of the local Egyptians.

This may be taken as the extreme point of the possible interaction of Syrian and Egyptian. On a scale ranging from no influence at all to the full absorption by Syrian influences, Egypt was at the minimal end.

This lack of receptivity by Egyptians to Syrian influences, even after many centuries of contact, highlights the surprising success of Christianity (and later of Islam), in capturing Egypt almost entirely. However, the Christian tradition that the religion was taken to Egypt in the first years after the death of Jesus has to be regarded with much scepticism, though it remains possible, if of little effect. The strong Jewish presence in Egypt until 115–117 would be likely to provide a social context for early conversions, but the destruction of the Jewish community in the rebellion of those years would probably encompass Christians as well. The occurrence of fragments of papyri which contain Christian texts cannot be taken as good evidence for conversions of Egyptians; those which can be approximately dated are largely of the late second or third century.

On the other hand, Christianity did employ some traditional Egyptian religious symbols and beliefs: the idea of a vigorous after-life in particular (in contrast to the boring Greek Hades); it was a literary religion, just as was the Egyptian. And perhaps above all, there were the long years of alien domination

by Greeks and Romans, which showed no sign of coming to an end. Roman oppression of the Egyptian population was heavy and constant, and perhaps more efficient than that of the Ptolemies, occasionally rising to extortion and persecution – and Christians were treated in much the same way. Fellow feeling, and fellow enmity to the ruling power, created something of a community of interest between Christians and Egyptians. The essential simplicity of Christianity – once one was away from the theologians – will also have encouraged conversion. The Egyptians adapted Christian beliefs even as they adopted them, making theirs a distinct version of the religion.

Apart from the early myths and legends of the first century AD, there is precious little sign of any Christians in Egypt until near the end of the second century, and Bishop Demetrios of Alexandria (in office 189–232) has been suggested as the first bishop to be able to develop a clear Church administration;[5] if so, this would imply that only then was there a sufficient number of Christians in Alexandria who could be organised and support the Church with their contributions. Once organised, it became possible to set about the serious work of conversion outside the city. The emergence of an ascetic tradition among Christian hermits and monasteries in the third century in the deserts of Egypt reinforced the message, and fitted in well with traditional Egyptian reactions to government persecution, which often involved a species of strike in which villagers withdrew to the desert. But, as became clear once Christianity became both tolerated by the government and then encouraged, these local Christian traditions, rooted in age-old Egyptian society and religion, only reinforced the anti-government traditions of the Christians, so that a local, one might say a nationalist, Egyptian Church – the Coptic – emerged.

II. Africa, Numidia, and Mauretania

'Africa' in the Roman period was the former Carthaginian home territory plus extensions along the North African coast to east and west; eastwards the province included the cities centred on Lepcis Magna in Tripolitania, and to the west it included other cities such as Hippo and Bone in the former Numidian kingdom and which formed the Numidia province; it also extended at times south into the Sahara Desert to gather in such oases as could be reached, Ghadames being the most important. To the west was Mauretania, which was not annexed in full until the 40s AD, and was then subdivided into two provinces, Mauretania Caesariensis, and, at the extreme west, Mauretania Tingitana (the modern Morocco, more or less). The African province was long a prosperous territory, productive of olive oil above all, but also cereals, and was one of the main sources of food for the city of Rome. It was controlled by a set of large landowners and farmed by serfs and slaves. To control it the Roman government kept just one legion, III *Augusta*, in the Numidian province, eventually settled at Lambaesis, where the legionary commander was also for much of the time the provincial governor as well. This single legion was supported by a considerable number of auxiliary forces, of which there were several sent from Syria. Roman control

gradually expanded over the semi-desert edge southward by the construction of several successive lines of control and many forts and watchtowers, a system which lasted into the third century, but which began to fail after the crisis of the rising by Gordians I and II against Maximinus Thrax in 238, and the subsequent cashiering of the legion.

No less than fourteen auxiliary regiments from Syria were positioned along the African-Mauretanian desert frontier. Ituraean, Commagenean, Emesan, and Palmyrene units were posted to guard the desert edge, notably at the choke-point at el-Kantara. Farther west, there were Syrian units posted to Mauretania, and most of these can be traced in various ways into the third century AD. These units, however, were posted generally to frontier posts, where they remained for many years, and they can scarcely have affected the local populations much from there. In Mauretania one unit gave its name to its posting, implying there were no previous inhabitants.

This concentration of Syrian military units, especially in the Mauretanian provinces, was unusually heavy and could have had considerable effect. The two provinces between them received two Ituraean regiments, a Parthian, one from Hama, one from Sebaste, and three units of *numeri*; three regiments from Syria, without further specification, were also there. This amounted to between 5000 and 6000 troops, sent to a relatively thinly populated region. Their effect, biologically, in terms of the economy, and in religion was surely considerable, though the evidence in detail is very limited. To the locals it must have seemed that the Roman army was a Syrian force.

The whole region had long been affected by Syrian influences mediated through the previous dominion of Carthage, and this effect should not be underrated, particularly as it is known that the old Punic language – Phoenician, that is, a dialect of Aramaic, which many of the incoming soldiers would also have spoken – continued to be used in the land, and probably this would include the worship of the Carthaginian gods, which were likewise versions of the Syrian deities.

The import of specifically Syrian deities in the Roman period was thus very partial, and was, it seems, concentrated largely among the soldiers, notably at the legionary base at Lambaesis, and alongside the auxiliary regiments in their isolated postings. The province of Africa itself was the site of the very earliest recorded appearance of Jupiter Dolichenus outside Syria, with the construction of the first Dolichenum and its dedication by the governor Sex. Iulius Maior in 126. The African legion III *Augusta* received recruits from Syria, and there were some Syrian auxiliary regiments stationed in the province, and though it is difficult to associate them directly with Dolichenus, they obviously constituted further Syrian influences. There were other instances of Dolichenus worship in the province as well, often associated with the presence of Syrian *auxilia*. Other Syrian gods arrived in the same way – Heliopolitanus, the Palmyrenes, and some others, including the worship of the god of Mount Casius, probably as a result of the Emperor Trajan's visit to that mountain god during his Parthian War. It may also be pointed out that the Syrian gods arrived in Africa well before either the Jews or the Christians.

The Jews were, from the evidence, largely concentrated in the area of Carthage city, near which there were two sets of catacombs. There were a few but isolated examples of records of Jews spread through the rest of North Africa; as single examples, they are unlikely to have had any serious influence on the local population. Further, the evidence also implies that the presence of Jews even in Carthage was of little account until about the end of the second century, which further suggests that the single examples in the rest of the region were even later. Their influence is thus likely to have been small.

It was therefore only with the arrival of Christianity, which indications imply was present first in the form of a Jewish sect (in the late second century), that any significant Syrian influence can be detected over a large part of North Africa (apart from the original Carthaginian/Punic effect). And yet, this was at first concentrated in and around Carthage, later in the other cities, and for a long time not at all in the countryside. It spread seriously through all North Africa only during the third century, even if, as the falling-away during the 'persecutions' suggests, acceptance was largely superficial in most cases. Such acceptance as there was appears to have been connected strongly with local social movements, anti-governmental above all, as in Egypt. In this it does not seem that Syrian influence can be attributed to the situation.

There is, therefore, a contrast between the influence of the military in the west, especially in Mauretania Tingitana, where a strong, if military, Syrian influence was present from the first century AD to the third, and that applied in the metropolis of Carthage, where it was mediated through the original Phoenician settlement (together with the arrival of Jews, probably originally from Rome) and then Christianity, but in these cases not until the third century.

In both geographical regions, however, there was a strong local reaction which may well have had a Syrian content. Mauretania Tingitana was especially subject to Syrian influence by the presence there of a heavy concentration of Syrian-recruited auxiliary regiments. In the third century, however, the local enmity to the Roman presence was sufficiently strong by about 280 to restrict the Roman province to the city of Tingis and a small area around it. That is, the experience in Mauretania was of an initially strong Syrian military presence but was followed by the elimination of the imperial presence altogether – very similar to what happened at much the same time in Dacia. The two aspects are, of course linked; the heavy military presence vanished with military defeat, and with it any Syrian influence they could exert after the defeat; the continuing influence after the event is impossible to estimate. For such influence to be profound enough to last beyond the liberation of the area it had to be exerted by more than a set of soldiers, no matter how numerous.

Meanwhile in the same period there was an anti-Roman, anti-governmental reaction in the rest of Africa which emerged as a sudden widespread acceptance of Christianity, just in the period when the central government was becoming increasingly concerned at its ubiquity. It may thus be presumed that Syrian influence, though perhaps strong during the imperial period, was being exerted in an anti-Roman way.

III. Asia Minor

The penetration of Syrian influence into Asia Minor was very largely restricted to the migration of Jews, and this had basically already happened during the Hellenistic period. But the Jews were largely in the interior, while non-Jewish Syrians were mainly in the coastal cities. The settlement of a few Syrians in the major coastal cities facing the Aegean – Ephesos, Iasos, and so on – can have had only a minor influence, particularly since the people who moved did so from one Greek city (in Syria) to another (in Asia Minor), and were moving to live among populations very similar to those they had left. The spread of Christianity amongst the population, on the other hand, was more pervasive, and less geographically restricted. This last had begun fairly early, if Paul of Tarsus' work was lasting, and according to Pliny the Younger in Bithynia he was able to detect a substantial Christian population by the early second century AD.

It is customary to attribute the early Christian expansion into Asia Minor to Paul, and the initial work by him may well be correct, though in considering Paul's work the conversion of a large quantity of new believers was hardly his achievement. It is therefore curious that the one place where independent evidence exists of considerable numbers of Christian believers in Asia, Bithynia, was not one of the places Paul visited. In fact the evidence derived from Paul's journeys is an indication of the occasional presence of Jews rather than of Christians. It is only by the mid-second century that we can see that Christians were relatively numerous in the cities of the Aegean coast; by coincidence, this was just where the civilian Syrians can be detected at roughly the same time.

The western part of Asia Minor was scarcely garrisoned by Roman troops, and there is no evidence for Syrian soldiers anywhere between the Taurus Mountains and the Aegean Sea. Similarly, the worship of the Syrian gods is conspicuously absent, other than Yahweh, of course, and eventually Christ. There are just two records of Dolichenus known, at Dorylaion and Comana, both of which were brief and not repeated. Such influence as there was therefore relies on the Jews, but the Jews of Asia Minor were descended from the Babylonian Jewish community (possibly the basic reason why they were unaffected by the several Jewish revolts and wars between 170 BC and AD 135). The influence of Syria in Asia Minor must therefore be counted as virtually nil, except in so far as the Jews were able to attract converts, a debatable matter, until the Christians had their effect.

In many ways this relative paucity of Syrian influence is curious. Syria was a close neighbour of Asia Minor, and there had been old political and economic connections between the two countries dating back to well before the Hittite Empire, and the arrival of Jewish migrants had been due to the very fact that the two countries were jointly parts of the Seleukid Empire; they had also shared a similar history at the beginning of Roman control in that many areas of their territories had been under client kings for some time. It seems that the original settlement of Jewish soldiers and their families had expanded in the subsequent centuries to other parts of the interior. But Asia Minor had a set of powerful

gods and goddesses of its own – Attis and Kybele, Mithras, Ma at Comana, the temple at Pessinos, the Goddess Magna Mater of Mount Ida, various Greek oracles on the Aegean coast, and so on, not to mention the fact that the national communities of the region were well established and somewhat resistant to religious change. They would not have seen any need to accept foreign religions, and some, notably in Phrygia, were still pagan in the sixth century AD.

The absence of the Roman military is easily explained by the situation in Asia Minor in the interior of the empire, by soldiers stationed at a distance. This would also restrict the spread of such soldier-linked gods as Dolichenus and Heliopolitanus who were strongly associated with the military. This apparent religious blank is thus best explained by the fact that, in religious terms, Asia Minor was as fertile of its own religions as Syria,[6] and there was thus little room for any of the Syrian gods other than Christianity. And in military terms, Asia Minor had its own legions, and its own *auxilia*, concentrated in the east facing the Parthian and Sassanid enemies, so there was little reason for Syrians to be transferred there, though Arrian certainly had some Syrian units in his army in fighting the Alans.

It was therefore only amongst the civilians from Syria that any strong influence could be exerted in Asia Minor, and yet it was civilians who, of all the groups who could exert any influence, exerted the least. Relatively few Syrians moved to Asia Minor, and those who did were able to integrate easily, simply because there were generally merchants of one sort or another, and therefore dealt with other merchants; the fact that all of these spoke Greek rendered any influence out of Syria invisible. (As in Mauretania, the influence of Syrians through a single societal group, in this case civilians, was not sufficient to have much effect.)

The relatively early receptivity to Christianity, therefore, must be seen as an unusual reaction among the people of Asia Minor. It is, however, as difficult as ever to discern what was happening. There are substantial records of Christian writings, and of a number of martyrdoms in the region in the second century,[7] but this scarcely proves a high incidence of Christians in the population, though it might imply a good geographical spread of groups, even if concentrated largely in the several cities – but this was a highly urbanised region – and, possibly among already-established Jews. The well-entrenched local gods and goddesses would have also put up much resistance (as Paul had discovered, notably at Ephesus).[8]

IV. Greece

Greece had long had multiple contacts with Syrians, the Phoenicians being notorious for their sharp mercantile practices as far back as the time of Homer and Hesiod. There were groups of Phoenicians and Jews in Greece in the Hellenistic period, and the visit of Paul of Tarsus to various cities in Greece in the first century AD was one of those contacts. The presence of Jews and then Christians in the country was more or less continuous during the Roman period, although

how numerous they were is clearly debatable. As in Asia Minor, Greece had no obvious Roman military presence. The Syrian religious influence was about as old as the mercantile, but any influence which Syrians might have exerted would need to contend with a firmly entrenched and well-understood Greek culture, which was likely to be very resistant to such religious elements as new versions of the worship of Zeus. Dolichenus and Heliopolitanus were always unlikely to make any headway and indeed there is no sign that either of them was present anywhere in the country (the occurrence of Dolichenus at Dorylaion was purely temporary).

On the other hand, the worship of Atargatis/*Dea Syra* was well established and widespread in Greece and Macedonia from the Hellenistic period through the third century AD at least. And yet, from the earliest years this was clearly linked with, and even in places integrated with, the worship of Aphrodite. Indeed, it would seem that, given that Atargatis' attributes of Syrian origin tended to disappear, or at least lessen, as she moved westwards, Aphrodite was the victor in this curious contest. The influence of Syrians was therefore limited to the presence of Jews, particularly in inland western Asia Minor, but also to some degree in Greece, and to the occurrences of the worship of *Dea Syra*/Atargatis, notably in Greece. This latter was unusually extensive, and penetrated to remote areas, partly perhaps due to the involvement of Atargatis in manumissions. This ubiquity must suggest a presence in cities where no record exists, and the assumption that *Dea Syra* would arrive with merchants from Syria and therefore reach the region first. The presence of Syrian civilians was less extensive in the Roman period than it had been in the Hellenistic, but was still largely confined to Athens.

Christianity may well have made some slow progress in the first century AD, but there are no records of martyrs in that period, or indeed later, and since Christians tended to seek martyrdom for publicity purposes, this would imply that Christians were few or absent. The games at Olympia and Delphi and elsewhere, celebrating the Greek gods, and the philosophical schools in Athens, all continued, as did the major oracles. There is only a thin scattering of churches known to have existed in the first three centuries AD; the schools of Athens lasted into the sixth century, and had to be forcibly closed down even then, just as the Olympic Games had had to be ended by imperial decree. The 'pagan' culture of Greece was as resistant to Christianity as the Egyptians had been to their conquerors.

V. Moesia and Thrace

In the lands to the north of Greece, the Balkan area, the provinces of Moesia and Thrace, the main examples of Syrians and Syrian influence lie along the Danube Valley and the Roman frontier region, but there are significant concentrations also in central Thrace, and the worship of *Dea Syra* and of Dolichenus were also present at several places along the Black Sea coast, as far round as the Bosporan kingdom in the Crimea, according to the records emanating from several of the cities.

The Roman army was concentrated, until the end of the first century and the conquest of Dacia, along the Danube River frontier. Several instances of the worship of Dolichenus come from the army posts, with *cohors* I *Cretum* notable for its early establishment of a Dolichenum close to its camp at Egeta; the new Roman cities along the river – Novae, Ratiaria, and others – also hosted the worshippers of Dolichenus. The Danube frontier, and the route along the banks of that river, was a region where several Syrian auxiliary regiments were posted. Two Commagenean regiments, an Arab regiment, and others recruited at Antioch, Chalcis, and Tyre, occupied forts along the frontier, though some of them moved into Dacia after the conquest. This was a considerable number of soldiers, perhaps 4000 from Syria, and there were others in the legions. There was therefore a strong Syrian presence, and the worship of Dolichenus was no doubt connected with it.

The worship of Dolichenus also spread into the inland areas of the two Moesian provinces, to Stobi, for example, where there was a considerable settlement of veteran soldiers, and to the area around the city of Augusta Traiana in Thrace (which had been a foundation of Philip II back in the 330s BC, as Philippopolis). This suggests a powerful influence in a region which had been badly damaged in the original Roman conquest, and so was perhaps susceptible to such influence. The presence of other Syrian gods, apart from Dolichenus, was thin, though *Dea Syra* appears along the Black Sea coast, and in the very south of Moesia Superior, perhaps a spillover from Macedon, and Jews are recorded at Augusta Traiana. We may also add the occurrence of Dolichenus at Olbia, on the coast, and of a Dolichenum at Balaklava and a Jewish synagogue at Phanagoria in the Crimean kingdom.

The heavy presence of Dolichenus, almost to the exclusion of any other Syrian gods, is very noticeable, as is the obvious link with the military. The early occurrence of his worship among a Cretan regiment would also suggest a rapid acceptance of Dolichenus as a suitable object of worship amongst other soldiers than Syrians; and the spread inland in Superior and Thrace would also imply his continued worship by retired veterans, and by civilians who took up the worship. The combination of the worship of Dolichenus and the presence of Syrian soldiers (and the presence of *Dea Syra*) implies a solid and continuing Syrian influence in the Moesian region.

There is comparatively little evidence, by contrast, of the presence of Christianity in these areas, at least before the imperial favour was indicated after 300.

VI. Dacia

In Dacia, conquered in the early second century at the third Roman attempt, one can also detect a serious and fairly widespread Syrian influence. Syrian regiments participated in the original conquest, Syrian regiments were part of the garrison of the new province, and three of them at least remained there until the region was abandoned by the Emperor Aurelian in 274. They brought in the worship of Syrian gods, in particular the gods of Palmyra and Doliche, together with

the occasional instance of *Dea Syra* and Heliopolitanus. Furthermore, some of the regiments at least appear to have been regularly reinforced by recruits from their original Syrian homeland, particularly the *numeri* from Palmyra, whose soldiers signed on for a tour of only six years, and so had to be more regularly replaced. The *numeri* were distributed over several places in the province, taking their names from their new locations – and one section retained its Dacian name when it was transferred to Africa. This rather suggests that the men became well settled into Dacia, and yet they also retained their contacts with Palmyra, partly through their regular reinforcement by new recruits, and they continued to worship their Palmyrene gods.

The dense army presence in Dacia, necessary for defence, is probably the origin of a similarly dense presence of the records of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus. At least twenty-five places have produced such records, the earliest from Apulum from the reign of Antoninus Pius (138–161), within thirty years of the first dated record (of Sex. Iulius Maior in Africa, and probably contemporary with the Dolichenus at Egeta, just south of the Danube). This is one of the densest concentrations of such records in the empire, and together with the presence of a dozen instances of the worship of other Syrian gods, and of the garrisons of Syrian military men, some of whom brought their own Palmyrene gods with them, the influence of Syria was clearly very strong.

On the other hand, the incidence of Christianity in the province is difficult to estimate, because it was abandoned by the empire before the adoption of Christianity by the imperial government. There are also no records of Jews in the province, and they were often the incubators of Christianity in any region. One would suppose that competition from Dolichenus and the Palmyrene gods, which were both firmly established alongside the Roman and the Dacian gods from the initial conquest, and perhaps *Dea Syra*, would have much restricted Christianity's appeal. The absence of Jews is repeated in the absence of records of civilians from Syria in the area, and together these emphasise that it was always a frontier province, perhaps only held provisionally even from the beginning.

Syrian influence is therefore likely to have been considerable in Dacia, spanning as it did a considerable religious presence and a major Syrian component of the military garrison. The abandonment of the province may have destroyed this influence in the abandoned territory, but the Roman citizens and soldiers and their gods were evacuated south of the Danube and the influence of Syrians would therefore have continued amongst them, and possibly it was even enhanced – in a way, in preparation for the acceptance of Christianity much later.

VII. Dalmatia

Dalmatia was one of the provinces in which Syrian influence was very small, and in this it fits alongside several of the western provinces of the empire. The garrison was fairly heavy in the first century AD, but was reduced later. The Syrian military presence was concentrated around Salonae, the provincial capital,

and Narona, which for a time had been the legionary base, where several Syrian soldiers were interred. The absence of any indication of their continuation into the second century reflects the reduction of the overall military presence in the province. The Syrian religious presence is thin and scattered, much of it along the coast, and consists almost entirely of references to the worship of Dolichenus, but considering the relatively slight military presence, it is fairly impressive. Nonetheless, one must conclude that Syrian influence in the province was relatively minor.

VIII. Italy

There is a major contrast between the city of Rome and the rest of Italy in the degree of Syrian influence which can be detected using such records as survive. Italy outside the great city exhibits a widespread, but by no means intense, influence from Syria and Syrians, though the Bay of Naples shows a heavy presence, and Dolichenus did penetrate into the civilian areas of the north of the peninsula and into some social areas which are perhaps surprising if the worship of that god is taken to be a military phenomenon. In this it is not far different from the scattered presence of Jews in several places in the peninsula. (Note that Dolichenus is absent south of Puteoli, and from Sicily.) Between them these are minor presences, though well scattered through the country.

The one place where this conclusion is contradicted is Puteoli and the Bay of Naples. Puteoli from the latter days of the Republic was host to a variety of Syrian groups who are best identified by their gods and temples – Dushares from Nabataea, gods from Berytos, Palmyra, and others. These remained as distinct social groups until well into the second century, possibly refreshed by the arrival of replacements from Syria as the older men died or retired. They were also reinforced to a degree by the presence of Syrians who served with the imperial fleet at Misenum. Though the more obvious Syrian presence gradually faded, a factor emphasised by the Nabataeans' gradual change from recording their devotions in Nabataean (and to the Nabataean king) to doing so in Latin, and by gradually adopting Latin names, it did not vanish until perhaps the third century. It seems we can best characterise the change as their assimilation into the local society (which was both Latin and Greek), but only slowly, and their gods and temples would seem to have continued; they were thus influential even as they assimilated. This was a very cosmopolitan city, and assimilation would not be thought altogether necessary.

The city of Rome, on the other hand, as was widely recognised at the time, received influences from all the empire, and the Syrian contingent was especially reviled, at least by Juvenal and his circle – and so conspicuous. Upon the basis of a fairly sturdy Latin culture, and supplemented by powerful Greek influences, which had been present as early as the beginning of the city itself, Syrian influence is notable. There was a strong presence of Jews in the city, and of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus, of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, and of Atargatis/*Dea Syra*. Dolichenus was particularly notable in having a well-established set of

several temples, attended by fairly wide variety of social classes, rich and not so rich, military and civilian; in this also Jupiter Heliopolitanus was well established in the city, and the worship in his rebuilt temple continued well into the fourth century, though it was perhaps rather less intense than that of Dolichenus. (If this temple really was burnt down in an arson attack, this suggests that the god's worship was sufficiently well established and prominent as to constitute a considerable competitor with whatever group carried out the arson attack – the Christians are the most obvious likely culprits.) Atargatis was also represented by a notable temple, and so by a considerable set of devotees.

The one element which was present elsewhere in the empire but generally absent in Italy was the military. Not until the reign of Severus was there a legion stationed near Rome, and the military presence elsewhere was little more than fleeting. The fleets at the Misenum and Ravenna were clearly open to Syrian influence, judging by the epitaphs of the dead sailors which survive, and senior soldiers from all over the empire served in the Praetorian Guard and the Urban Cohorts, Syrians amongst them, but the fleets were relatively small, of substantially lower prestige than the army, and located at some distance from the centre of power. But, unlike the gods and temples, any Syrian influence from the military was not thus concentrated. Rome, of course had the Guard, in its camp on the outskirts of the city, and its city *Vigiles*, recruited from former soldiers, but there was little military presence in the rest of the peninsula. There was certainly a Dolichenum on the Esquiline for the Guard, but it also contained a wide variety of recognitions of other gods, not just Dolichenus. The military effect from Syria was thus much attenuated, and was minor compared with the civilian.

It is worth emphasising that the Syrian influence did not rely entirely on the export of soldiers, but that the religious influence out of Syria was still pervasive. In Italy outside Rome, it was religious Syria which had such influence as there was, and in both Rome and the rest of Italy it was largely non-military people who commemorated the Syrian gods. Their presence is scattered from Syracuse in Sicily to Tridentum close to the Alps, though given the well-collected epigraphic records of Italy it cannot be said that these instances show a heavy presence. The majority, as usual, are of Dolichenus, but neither Jews nor *Dea Syra* are negligible.

It is also the case that Christianity was early established in the city of Rome, for there are references to Christians as early as the mid-first century AD (reigns of Claudius and Nero).[9] The degree of Christian influence and presence in Rome has, however, been considerably exaggerated in the Christian sources, and it is only from about the mid-second century that one can speak of, for example, an established bishop in the city – the earliest to be given such a title in the latest review of the evidence is Victor, elected in 190, though of the traditional list of 'popes', the ninth, Pios, is accepted as a 'presbyter' from about 140.[10] The mode of disputes among Christians in the city implies much division amongst them, and a consequent likely inability to proselytise. Records of persecution have also been exaggerated, or invented, but the fact that persecution did occur, most notoriously under Nero, but not then very often until the time of Decius

(250–251), does imply a fairly numerous enough presence of Christians to establish them as possible scapegoats, or in some cases possible dangers to the imperial establishment. Yet a large number would have provided mutual protection; the persecutions do also imply relatively small numbers.

In the end, of course, the Christian presence overwhelmed the rest, though not quite so swiftly or completely as it presumably hoped. It is possible that the worship of Dolichenus came to an end during the later third century, though no chronological precision exists; it is known that the worship of Heliopolitanus at Rome certainly continued into the fourth century, and, of course, the Jews continued along their own way. The worship of *Dea Syra* was certainly still alive in the late third century and so probably into the fourth. It was Christianity which captured the imperial government, but only after the sun god, under Elagabalus and Aurelian, and a revived Roman official religion under Diocletian, had failed to defeat it. It might be said, therefore, that Syrian influence in the form of Christianity overwhelmed even the imperial government.

It was Christianity which successfully expanded out of the city into the surrounding Italian countryside, and in this it contrasted very strongly with all the other Syrian religions – their records are all from cities (but then so are most epigraphic records). By the mid-third century there were bishoprics established, however precariously in times of persecution, throughout south and central Italy, in marked contrast to the absence of Heliopolitanus and *Dea Syra*, and to the thin scattering of Dolichenus evidence in the same areas. However, in Italy as in Africa, the existence of a bishop does not always imply a large community of Christians; the title of bishop was very loosely used in the early centuries.

Juvenal's complaints about the Orontes emptying itself into the Tiber draws attention to the fact that, particularly in Rome, a large civilian population of Syrians of various types and origins was present by his time. These would include slaves, who are very largely invisible in the records. The quantity of slaves exported from Syria, particularly in the later Hellenistic period, was very substantial, and their sale and arrival continued all through the imperial period, including the sale of Jewish captives after the several Jewish Wars. One of the major sources of the presence of Atargatis in Sicily was Syrian slaves, for example. It is impossible to calculate the numbers of slaves delivered to Italy and particularly to Rome, just as it is impossible to estimate their influence there, but they were no doubt among the worshippers of the Syrian gods and goddesses. The association of Atargatis with the manumission of slaves in Greece (and perhaps in Sicily) would prejudice such people in her favour, as against the stern maleness and military connections of the Jupiters.

In the same way, slaves appear to have been able to join in Christian worship, at least before Christianity took on the class consciousness of its surrounding Roman society. Rome being the great market of the empire, it attracted considerable Syrian merchants and artisans, of which those at Puteoli are a sample, but their numbers and proportions in the general population are impossible to detect. But all these people have to be borne in mind as silent influences out of Syria on the general Roman population, and once Christianity expanded into

the countryside, on the general Italian population. It is noticeable, for example, that Dolichenus worship depended to a large extent on priests brought in from Syria; in the same way, a large proportion of the earliest Christian priests in the city were Greek-speakers from Syria – Victor in 190 is thought to be the first Latin-speaking bishop (the earlier presbyters have Greek names), and Greek appears to have been the normal language of Christians in Rome until the later second century. Syrian influence in Rome was clearly very substantial at all levels of the population, and in the form of Christianity it expanded throughout Italy by the third century. In some areas, particularly Rome and Puteoli, the groundwork had been well laid by the other competing Syrian Christian religions.[11]

IX. Pannonia

Pannonia is one of the Roman frontier regions, like Dacia, Moesia, and Britannia, and perhaps Mauretania Tingitana, in which Syrian influence was stronger than most. There are substantial numbers of dedications to Jupiter Dolichenus in the region, and there was a large settlement of Syrians attached to *cohors* I *Hemesenorum* at Intercisa, where there is evidence for the worship of all the Syrian gods and goddesses who were exported; together with the families and the gods the soldiers brought with them, the town must be regarded as a Syrian colony planted on the Roman northern frontier. There were Ituraean regiments at Arrabona, and the Aelian regiment at Klosterneuberg as well, and Syrian soldiers in the legionary base at Brigetio. The records indicate that the Syrians in these bases were spread throughout the province, either on detachment or as veterans. The legionary base at Carnuntum had a well-established Dolichenum, and the legions there and at Brigetio had substantial contacts with Syria and with the local Syrian auxiliary regiments, and had recruited Syrians when they were briefly posted to Syria. There are also a number of dedications to Jupiter Heliopolitanus in the area, together with other *auxilia*, and several records of Jews and the worship of *Dea Syra*. So we can say that the Syrian influence in Pannonia was particularly strong, even though it may well not have overwhelmed the Latin and the basic Pannonian culture.

The evidence is concentrated, as in Moesia, along the river frontier, but it is by no means confined there. A line of records parallel to the southern boundary of the two provinces implies the use of the road to Italy which crossed the Julian Alps in the southwest corner, and there are several records from inland areas of the provinces.

There is no trace of Christianity anywhere in Pannonia before the mid-third century, and no buildings associated with it until the fourth century. Even in the records of the Diocletianic persecution those attacked by his persecutors in Pannonia appear to have been Greek-speakers, and were probably migrants from the east; they claimed to have been brought up as Christians, which is certainly possible in the east, but hardly in Pannonia.[12] The slowness of the religion to reach into Pannonia may be due to the strong competition it faced from the better-established eastern religions (and, among the soldiers, Mithras). But it may

also be that its eventual rapid success in the fourth century owed a good deal to the preexisting acceptance of these eastern cults in both the soldiers and among the general population, and, of course, to its new official status.[13]

X. Raetia and Noricum

The section of the northern frontier in Raetia and Noricum lay along the Danube in Bavaria, and consisted essentially of a series of auxiliary forts; no legions were stationed in either province. The garrisons were pushed forward along the Raetian frontier in the later first century, and then retracted in the mid-third. (The conquered area, the Agri Decumantes, may have had its own provincial government, but here the territory is included in its adjacent provinces – Raetia and Germania Superior – where relevant evidence exists.) In Noricum the *ala* I *Commagenorum* gave its name to the fort at Commagena, still bearing that name two centuries after the regiment itself seems to have disappeared. This survival means that people survived who knew the place, and its curious name, from the time of the regiment's presence, and would also suggest that there was a continuing influence of Syrians in the area, perhaps reinforced by a substantial incidence of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus along that part of the frontier, as for example at Mauer an der Uhl.

In both provinces there is a scattering of records of the worship of Dolichenus along the river boundary, clearly associated with the garrisons in the forts – though it must be recalled that the treasures found at Mauer an der Uhl were mainly deposited by women, possibly doing so with reference to the fates of their husbands and sons. But just to demonstrate that generalisation between provinces is dangerous, in Raetia four records of Dolichenus near the frontier are accompanied by records of two of the other Syrian gods, and in Noricum there is a substantial group of Dolichenus records around Virunum in the south, along the valley of the Drave River, which may best be seen as a continuation of the line of records detected in the Drave and Save river valleys in Pannonia. Noricum has no records of any Syrian god but Dolichenus.

How influential Christianity became in this frontier area is difficult to say; on analogy with Pannonia to the east, it probably arrived very late in the period covered in this book, if at all. St Severinus in eastern Noricum in the late fifth century was still coping with local pagans as well as complaining of the absence of the imperial government. There were undoubtedly Christians along the frontier by then, but it was scarcely the most welcoming area for the practice of their religion, and again on the analogy of Pannonia, it is unlikely there were any before AD 200, and they were probably extremely scarce even in AD 300.

XI. Germania

There was a notable Syrian military presence in the Wetterau area of the middle Rhine, around Mogontiacum, where the River Main joins the Rhine, which was brought into the empire by Domitian in the 80s. This was an active frontier area

for a long time, and here there are records of Syrians and Syrian regiments from the earliest imperial period – no less than five regiments in this small area – and the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus became established for some time in the area. The concentration in this area is similar to those in Dacia and Pannonia, and can be regarded as reasonably intense, but it only emphasises the very local effect of any Syrian influence. It is noticeable, however, that neither of these were particularly widespread in the rest of the provinces of Germany – the only other auxiliary regiments from Syria were at Novaesium in the north. By contrast with this military and religious presence of Syrians in the small Wetterau area, about fifty kilometres square, there is an almost complete absence of records of either Jews or civilians, and very little else concerning Syrians in the rest of these two provinces (only five records of Dolichenus, and none of any of the others, in the whole Inferior province); this is very similar situation to that in Gallia and Hispania, but a strong contrast to the rest of the northern frontier, and to Britannia.

It is very difficult to discern much in the way of Christianity in this region until the very end of the imperial period. In this the German provinces were obviously similar to the rest of the frontier region, all the way from the Black Sea to the North Sea. To a degree, however, it has to be noted that the thin record rather draws attention to the considerable gaps in that coverage. Since the German frontier region has been well investigated by historians and archaeologists for the last century and more, one must assume that there really was little or no presence of Syrians and still less Syrian influence in those gaps – at least until Christianity became the official Roman religion and was to some extent imposed on the population; but just how Syrian Christianity still was by that time, after it had been acquired and reorganised and reinvented by the imperial Roman state, is a question difficult to answer: probably hardly at all.

XII. Hispania and Gallia

Out of the whole empire these six provinces – a large part, perhaps a fifth, of the empire – were the least affected by Syria and Syrian influence. No Syrian regiments were posted in the regions, which stretched from the English Channel to Gibraltar, and very few instances of the worship of Syrian gods can be found, except for the fairly uncertain cases of the bronze hands which are supposed to be thank offerings and are also believed to be connected with Jupiter Dolichenus, found along the Rhone-Seine route in Gallia. It is necessary to wait until the record shows the presence of Christianity to find any serious Syrian influences, but even these are few until the late second century (the record of the martyrdoms at Lyon in 177), and in Spain the record is extremely sparse until the third century, when large numbers of bishops suddenly appear. It is not that Syria was unknown to the people of the region. Southern Spain had been colonised, after all, from Phoenicia and Carthage long before, and there are instances of ships reaching Gallic and Spanish waters with Syrian goods (and gods) on board. But it clearly took the presence of individuals to have any influence on the locals,

and such Syrian arrivals were rare. There is very little sign of a Jewish presence in any of these provinces, for instance, and the Syrian gods and goddesses are largely absent, Dolichenus being the most common presence, if the sparse spread of records can deserve such a description.

The absence of any clear influence from Syria before the arrival of Christianity makes it very difficult to argue that such influence was a necessary preliminary to the establishment of Christianity, as might be suggested in some regions. One theory could be that the presence of the worship of Syrian gods was a preliminary to the wholesale takeover of religious affairs by Christianity. This is clearly arguable in some areas where there was a reasonably dense presence of the worship of those gods, and where elements such as the simple Dolichenums or synagogues existed, both of which might be seen as precursors of Christian churches, and where priests sent from Syria serviced the congregations – Moesia, Pannonia, and Italy are examples. In both cases the worship was clearly more congregational than the practices in the traditional Greek or Roman religions. But this cannot be assumed for Gaul and Spain and therefore such a theory would need rather more evidence for the connection than exists. On the other hand, Christianity spread fairly well in Gallia, fuelled by some spectacular persecutions and martyrdoms, and it could be argued that it was filling the congregational void which already existed, and which was simultaneously, in the second and third centuries, being occupied by Dolichenus, Judaism, *Dea Syra*, and other Syrian deities (and to a degree by Mithraism as well). That is the various Syrian religions were competing in the same market, to bring to an alienated non-Roman population a more consolatory religion than was available from the Roman state.

Christianity did exist in Gaul from perhaps the mid-second century, as the martyrdoms recorded at Lyon in 177 and at other places show, but how extensive it was at that time is debatable, for no evidence exists. In Spain it gained a considerable hold in the south by the first half of the third century, and so arguably it had arrived and succeeded some time earlier, but not necessarily earlier than in Gallia or North Africa. It was especially successful in the Baetican province, where there was a large number of bishops in office during the third century, but the usual caution is required over assuming that this represents a high percentage of the population having become Christian. In Gaul, however, there were still only half a dozen bishops in office in the early fourth century.

XIII. Britannia

It is curious that, while the near-continent – Gallia, Germania Inferior – was very little affected, if at all, by influences from Syria, Britannia exhibits a considerable range of such influences. As in several other northern provinces, they concentrate in the frontier area, though not entirely. The presence of the *cohors* I *Hamiorum* on both Hadrian's Wall (at Carvoran) and the Antonine Wall (at Bar Hill) brought with it the worship of *Dea Syra*; the Dolichenum at Vindolanda persisted in use later than almost any other on record anywhere in the

empire, and there are a number of records of Syrian civilians being present in the province.

On the other hand, there are no records of Jews in the province, and the earliest record of a Christian is that of St Alban, martyred in the mid-third century, if the myth-encrusted (and mis-dated) legend is to be believed, and otherwise only a few notices in the fourth century. *Cohors* I *Hamiorum* may have been reinforced from Syria during its stay in the province, but there is really no evidence of this; the regiment disappeared soon after AD 200 and had been in the same small areas (on both walls) for a long time; any influence it may have had cannot have been more than local.

The worship of Jupiter Dolichenus was present at several places, particularly in the northern region from York to Hadrian's Wall, but it was present at half a dozen places in the unmilitarised part of the province as well. There is a clear connection between the *Hamiorum* regiment at Carvoran and the worship of this and other Syrian deities, for the fort contains records of the worship of *Dea Syra*, and Jupiter Heliopolitanus as well as Dolichenus.

There is one other record of the worship of *Dea Syra*, at Cataractonium in Yorkshire, and three records of civilians, two on the Wall and one in London. The presence of a Palmyrene, married to a British woman, at South Shields, is sufficiently exotic, but there is also the case of the former sailor in the Syrian fleet who ended his career on the Cumberland coast. With such arrivals from the east, the presence of the worship of Syrian gods and goddesses becomes less surprising.

However, it must be concluded that, despite the considerable records of the presence and activity of Syrians in Britannia – which may well be due to rather more assiduous excavation and recording than elsewhere in the empire – little of influence from Syria can be detected, unless, that is, one can see the presence of Syrian gods as precursors to the arrival of Christianity. Yet, this does not seem to work, since the records of the worship of the Syrian deities is concentrated in the north, and the records of Christianity in Britannia, such as they are, and which really only begin in the fourth century, are heavily concentrated in the south.

XIV. Summary

It will be seen that the evidence adduced, concerning principally military and religious exports from Syria to the rest of the empire, suggests that the Syrian presence in the empire was distinctly patchy. The heavy concentration on military evidence inevitably skews the results towards the imperial frontiers. And yet there are still areas where one would expect a Syrian presence where there is little. The African provinces of Africa, Numidia, and Mauretania certainly show some Syrian presence, based around the garrison of *legio* III *Augusta* at Lambaesis and its auxiliaries, but it is scarcely overwhelming. There were large areas of the German frontier from the boundary of Raetia with Noricum all the way to the North Sea, which show no real indication of any Syrian presence, except in a small area of the Wetterau. By contrast Dacia, Moesia, and Pannonia contained

a large fraction of the auxiliary regiments recruited in Syria, as did Mauretania Tingitana, and these are to be attributed the large number of records of Syrian deities.

Behind the frontier the evidence of a Syrian presence is necessarily non-military, which in this case means religious, with a few civilians. Here again there are areas which show up blank on the map, notably Gallia and Hispania, but also Asia Minor (except for Jews and Christians), and in a way Egypt. It is not possible to suggest a single explanation for all of this variation of response, but one might suggest the powerful local hold of the local gods in Egypt and Asia; the absence of a military garrison may be the best explanation for Gallia and Hispania.

The religious influence of the Syrian gods and goddesses were spread into most parts of the empire. Some gods took root in certain areas to the exclusion of any of the other gods. In Greece *Dea Syra* as Atargatis was virtually the only Syrian deity to have a presence, apart from a small Jewish representation; by contrast the only Syrian religious presence in inland Asia Minor was Jewish, though along the coast several others were present. In Italy, apart from the conurbations of Rome and the Bay of Naples, where all religions were represented, it was Jupiter Dolichenus which was the most common of the Syrian gods. In this, therefore, it seems that Greece was exceptional, which would not have surprised the Greeks. Any influences which the Syrians might exert in the empire therefore occurred in two distinct contexts: along the frontier in the camps of the army, and in the rest of the empire in towns and cities.

Notes

1 For examples see chapters 5 and 6 of A. K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs*, London 1986, and the particular case of 'the recluse Ptolemaios', described in N. Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt*, Oxford 1986, 69–87.

2 The Coptic Church, of course, also used the Egyptian language, and an adaptation of the old script for its scriptures.

3 D. J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, 2nd ed., Princeton, NJ 2012, 82–85.

4 Theokritos, *Idyll* 15.

5 W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church, from the Beginning to 461*, 2nd ed., London 1982, 75; *Cambridge History*, vol. 1, chapter 18.

6 For Mithras see M. Clauss, *The Roman Cult of Mithras*, trans. Richard Gordon, Edinburgh 2000; Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithras*, London 1903, and D. Ulansey, *The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries*, Oxford 1989; for Cybele, M. J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis, the Myth and the Cult*, trans. A. M. H. Lammers, London 1977; for a general view, Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, London 1911.

7 *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 1, chapter 17.

8 The remark in H. Chadwick, *The Early Church*, London 1967, 60, that 'Christianity spread with remarkable rapidity in Syria . . . and Asia Minor and Greece', is neither documented nor argued, merely asserted, and cannot be accepted, except as assuming that the work of Paul of Tarsus was much more thorough and extensive than it seems; for Ephesus see Acts 19.23–41.

9 The sources for Christianity in Rome are numerous, but must be subject to the usual scepticism.

10 *Fasti Sacerdotium*, 257, 319.
11 See the *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 1, chapter 22, for one account of Christianity in Rome.
12 A. Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London 1974, 258–259.
13 The *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 1, ignores Pannonia – and in fact the whole European Roman frontier area as well; is this absence of evidence, or evidence of absence of Christianity in these areas?

Conclusion

Syrian participation in the Roman Empire

On such a large subject of the Roman Empire it is necessary to subdivide the study of any subject into reasonably manageable sections, but in doing so it is all too easy to lose sight of the whole. This becomes all the more difficult to avoid when the view of events is not only divided geographically and socially, but has large areas missing from the picture. In this study it is noticeable, when one rises out of the litter of inscriptions and isolated buildings, army units, and religions, that what is largely absent is any clear view of the non-military, non-religious activity of Syrians in the rest of the empire.

To a degree this can be remedied by locating the few who have left records, such as merchants at Puteoli or the Palmyrene who ended up at Hadrian's Wall, and by assuming that the records of worshippers of the Syrian gods were probably civilian if they lived away from the military frontiers – as is probably the case in much of Italy, for example. But then this would incur the danger of counting such people twice, thus further distorting the view which is already more empty than populated. Distortion and blank spaces are inherent in the record, and any conclusions are to be discounted to some extent in advance for that reason. And yet, it is worth proceeding even on that basis, for this is a subject which provides the essential background to the great revolution of late antiquity, the imperial adoption of Christianity.

We must begin by recognising what is too often ignored or forgotten: that Syria was one of the major regions of the Roman Empire. As such one must expect that its people would have a considerable influence on the rest of the empire, and that its substantial wealth and population should have ensured that it was a major participant in the internal and external events affecting the empire. But an examination of the actual participation of Syrians in the empire's affairs and life, and the records which remain to attest it, do not encourage that view, and the Syrians who operated at the highest level did not in fact have any large effect. The emperors who emerged from Syria were no more than four in number, and were outnumbered by Syrian usurpers. The number of senators from Syria was always few in comparison with other regions such as Africa and Spain. The same may be said of the lower-level administrators, and the take-up of citizenship by Syrians was reluctant, to say the least. There was no attempt by Syrians, therefore, to participate seriously

in affairs at the heart of the empire; indeed, one might better characterise their attitude as indifference.

There is little in the way of direct literary testimony on the subject of individuals below the social level of the wealthy, other than such fragments as Juvenal's snarled comments on the Orontes flowing into the Tiber and the Jews in Rome, both of which are unique testimony, apply to a single city, and can scarcely represent a majority opinion, even in Rome. So it is necessary to resort to epigraphic records in the main. The information which such records provide, while often specific, are difficult to generalise from, and provide as distorted a view in their way as that of Juvenal. This has determined that Syrian participation must be measured by means of the presence or absence of individual Syrians in the rest of the empire, as military people and units, or by the incidence of religions which originated in Syria. It is thus extremely difficult to pronounce finally on the extent of their participation. The records are more than usually fragmentary and refractory.

These records are not only fragmentary, they are minimal. That is to say, the information they provide is the absolute minimum of what must have originally existed. A great deal of Syrians' activity as Roman subjects and citizens is obviously lost. What we have is only a small part of what was produced, in, for example, the bureaucratic records of both the central and the provincial governments. Furthermore, what originally existed was only the literate part of their contribution and participation; there was much more activity and there were many more records than we now know of. Consequently, what we see must represent only the broken remnants of an originally much greater effect. And it is concentrated on essentially two areas of participation, the military and the religious, leaving out most mercantile activity – Syria was a major trading region – much civilian emigration, and any record of the activities and movements of slaves.

Yet an attempt to understand can be made, based on the minimal records which survive. The number of soldiers recruited from Syria, above all into the *auxilia*, was unusually large, with rather fewer men also entering the legions which were stationed in Syria, though in unknown numbers; a large quantity of auxiliary regiments were formed and continued in existence in some cases to the end of the fourth century. The process of recruitment continued from the original conquest in 64 BC at least until the reign of Hadrian, and probably longer, though the founding of new regiments seems to stop at that point. It has proved extremely difficult to locate any examples of *auxilia* which were reinforced by new Syrian recruits in their new postings, but the very fact that they originated with such recruits and were then posted to various parts of the empire, implies that they had an influence on the inhabitants of the territories to which they were sent. And several can be shown to have been refreshed by new recruits from the homeland, despite the paucity of evidence. The men must have seemed exotic at the very least when they arrived in such places as northern Britain or the Danube.

The recruitment of large numbers of Syrians also might be said to reflect the general Syrian indifference to the empire as implied by the reluctance of the upper classes to participate in its government. For a Roman government the best insurance against rebellion (which could be the next stage beyond indifference) would be to abstract large numbers of young men, the likeliest group to be rebellious soldiers, into their own army and send them away to serve Rome elsewhere. This, of course, was normal imperial policy, but the long campaigns of recruitment in Syria support the assumption that trouble from Syria was a constant fear. Not an unfulfilled fear, of course, as the Jewish rebellions attest – and it was exactly this element of the population, the Jews of Judaea, which was not subject to the Romans' forcible recruitment, and whose wealthy classes were even more reluctant to participate in the imperial government than the rest of the Syrians. The annexation of the several client kingdoms of Syria followed rapidly on the Jewish rebellion of AD 66–73, and indicates again that Syrian enmity was feared.

The Syrian regiments also carried the men's gods with them into their new stations, as is demonstrated at such auxiliary camps as Carvoran on Hadrian's Wall and Intercisa on the Danube. They were followed by those gods who moved out of Syria, so to say, without a military escort. It is noticeable that, apart from the Jews, there is little evidence of Syrian religions in the rest of the empire until the early second century. The most active of these gods, Jupiter Dolichenus, is first recorded in 126, and this is exactly the same period when Jupiter Heliopolitanus appears at Puteoli – though they are recorded in such a way as to imply an earlier period of presence at these places. Only after another half-century were there more than a few more attestations. *Dea Syra* is different, having been domesticated in Greece for a couple of centuries even before the Roman Empire arrived, and she had particular and peculiar roles to play in relation to slavery, which no doubt encouraged her colonisation of such places as Sicily. She was also concentrated above all in countries where Greek was the spoken tongue – Greece, Sicily, Rome.

Geographically, Dolichenus was the most universal of these Syrian deities, being recorded in virtually all provinces, though in the west (Gallia and Hispania) less so than other regions. *Dea Syra* and Jupiter Heliopolitanus scarcely reached beyond Italy in their reach to the west, nor did the Jews. The records of civilians from Syria in the rest of the empire mimic the spread of Jupiter Dolichenus and are present in most provinces, though it has to be said that their records are very sparse. We can say therefore that almost the whole of the empire was touched by Syrians, and that their presence will have had some effect on the local native populations. But certain areas were much more profoundly affected than others, and this is only to be expected.

There is, however, another strong contrast between *Dea Syra* and Heliopolitanus on the one hand, and Dolichenus on the other: the records of the former are heavily concentrated in the 'civilian' provinces (in the interior of the empire), while those of the latter are concentrated in the 'military' provinces along the

frontier. This is not surprising with *Dea Syra*, a fairly peaceable goddess, but Heliopolitanus might have been expected to be to be more militant, having been converted to a Roman religion by the men of a *colonia* settled by the veterans of two legions. And, of course, it is considerably misleading with regard to Dolichenus to imply he was merely military, for a substantial quantity of his records are also in the 'civilian' provinces, or were originated by women. It is perhaps partly due to the greater numbers of Dolichenus records, but it is clear that the worship of this god appealed much more widely – geographically and socially – than that of any of its Syrian competitors. Between them, however, the three religions most satisfactorily encompass virtually all the empire – except the western provinces in Gallia and Hispania. And this comprehensiveness is the main point here, for the experience of these gods and goddesses was the main way that Syrian influence invaded the rest of the empire.

Both military participation and the extension of Syrian religions through the empire operated largely at the level of individuals. To be sure, the military units had no option but to be stationed where the Roman government placed them, but when in post, any influence they exercised was through the actions of individual soldiers, and by their contacts with the local people. In this, both military and civilian as well as secular and religious were similar – until Christianity was adopted as the state religion and became an instrument of the Roman state, at which point religion became less an individual affair and more an increasing object of state concern.

There is a curious contrast between Syrian participation in the life of the empire at the level of the wealthy, where participation would seem to have been reluctant and minimal, and the willingness of many Syrian men to join the army – though, to be sure, a considerable element of compulsion was involved in their recruitment. But there is here a clear social division, for it was only the poorer classes that joined the army. The only plausible explanation is that the elite in Syria disdained the empire, and chose to maintain themselves aloof, probably for social and perhaps material reasons. It may also be that the expense of an imperial career was a deterrent, though this seems unlikely, Syria being a wealthy region. And, of course, once launched on such a career, a man was expected to conform to the practices of the Roman official imperial religion. Only the lower classes had the freedom to choose how to express their religious beliefs; hence, in part, the spread of Christianity.

The disjunction between the individual participation by people of the lower classes and the aloofness of the elite was only partly erased by the spread of the Syrian religions. The successes of Jupiter Dolichenus and Christianity would seem to have been a result of their more adequate organisational achievements, in the one by the export of priests from Syria, who would no doubt regulate the processes of worship, and in the other by Christianity's imitation of the Roman governmental structure – but note that Christianity was also organised around priests, many of whom in the early centuries were trained in the east and were Greek-speakers (hence, no doubt, the slowness of the religion to secure a hold in the west). Whether the Dolichenus priests were an imitation of Christian

practice, or the reverse, is an unanswerable issue, though the later appearance of Dolichenums and their priests rather suggests that it may well have been imitating Christianity. On the other hand, the temple at Doliche had been well established in the Hellenistic period long before the invention of Christianity, and it will have had its priests all along (and if so, then probably since the Iron Age). It may not have needed the stimulus of Christianity as a competitor for the temple to begin sending out its priests to other parts of the empire. The coincidence of an active travelling priesthood in the two most successful of the Syrian religions suggests that both of them quickly perceived the need for organisation – something both appear to have learned only after their expansion began. Helipolitanus also shows elements of organisation, as in Puteoli and Rome, but it was a less widely accepted religion than the others, and clearly failed to compete successfully with either.

Syria came fully into the empire with its problems of the third century, which came to affect Syria disproportionately: the ravaging of north Syria by the Sassanid invasions, including damage, if not worse, to the Doliche temple, the destruction and loss of two of the provinces in which Syrians were especially prominent – Dacia and Mauretania Tingitana – and the abandonment of certain parts of the Danube frontier, where Syrian regiments stood on guard; all had their effects upon both Syria and on the participation of Syrians in other parts of the empire. The withdrawal from Dacia was not total, for many of the military units were relocated south of the Danube, in a new Dacian province in what had been Moesia, and there is evidence that a certain degree of Roman presence remained north of the river even after the imperial abandonment. Similarly, it seems that the withdrawal from the Agri Decumates was planned and accomplished without trouble.

So, just as Syria was compelled to become a full participant in the empire in self-defence, the strongest sources of Syrian influence in the rest of the empire were being seriously damaged – the loss of the provinces in which the Syrian regiments were stationed and the progressive destruction of many of the Dolichenums were obviously restricting Syria's wider influence. The spread of Christianity was not a substitute for this loss, since it could no longer be considered a 'Syrian' religion by the time it was co-opted to support the imperial government.

The recovery of the empire in the late third and early fourth centuries was accompanied by the victory of Christianity over the other religions of the empire, including its Syrian competitors, above all the most successful of those competitors, Jupiter Dolichenus. Yet even Christianity had only, by AD 300, patchily reached the empire outside Syria; even in Syria it continued to face prolonged and considerable resistance, resorting in the end, in the fifth century, to violence and the destruction of competing temples. Its eventual total victory was due to a type of terrorist tactics, some violence, much propaganda, specious promises of rewards hereafter, and martyrdoms which could too often seem much like assisted suicides or publicity stunts. In the end, the imperial government co-opted the religion rather than continuing to fight it. None of

the competing religions adopted such tactics, which suggests that violence was as persuasive as Christianity's curious set of beliefs.

The fourth century was therefore one in which Christianity consolidated the power it had gained by its control of the imperial government, using that power to compel non-Christians to toe the line. In this there seems little doubt that it was assisted by the preliminary work of such rival religions as Jupiter Dolichenus and the Jews. Both of these owed a great deal to continuing influence, even organisation, from Syria, most notably the priests of Dolichenus. The Doliche temple dispatched missionaries throughout the eastern empire, just as the Christian Church did at much the same time. The strong control maintained by the Doliche organisation over the priests contrasted with the much looser Christian organisation. The result in the Christian movement was a wide variety of practices within the Christian Church – but that looser organisation was in the end more successful in gathering believers, even if it produced much internal disruption and persecution. None of this was apparent in the Dolichenus Church.

In addition, the domestication of *Dea Syra* in Greece will have assisted in the spread of the gospel claiming to be of love: she could be easily assimilated with devotion to the Virgin Mary, especially when linked with Greek Aphrodite, and the connection of Atargatis with slave manumission could be linked to the early emphasis by the Church on a refusal to accept the social class systems of the surrounding social territory – 'neither slave nor free', in Paul's words – though this did not last, of course, social attitudes being too strong. That is, Christianity's expansion was built in part on the participation of Syrians in the process and on the influence they had exerted on the rest of the empire at the level of individuals, particularly amongst the lower classes during the previous centuries in the worship of other Syrian deities. In this it was in direct competition with the other Syrian religions, but also benefited from their presence.

The competition is suggested strongly by the differential appearance of the two or three main religions in parts of the empire. The expansion of Christianity through the empire was concentrated in certain areas – North Africa, southern Spain, Asia Minor – where Dolichenus and *Dea Syra* were both largely absent. Where these deities were certainly worshipped throughout the region – in Greece, much of Italy, the northern frontier – the penetration of Christianity had to wait until it was given the assistance of the imperial government. It was clearly this which proved decisive in the competition. Had Constantine chosen Dolichenus as his god, the outcome would have been very different.

Thus the participation of Syrians in the Roman Empire was overwhelmingly in the form of the recruitment of Syrian soldiers, and in religion. But the political and military setbacks of the empire in the third century destroyed large parts of both of these – the loss of Syrian-garrisoned provinces of Dacia and Mauretania Tingitana, the destruction of many of the Dolichenums – so that the influence of the deity was reduced and could be replaced by the imperial version of Christianity. Given the obvious basic strength of the religions within Syria, which was analogous to the power of the Egyptian religion within its homeland, or of other firmly established beliefs in Greece and Asia Minor,

tempered as they had been by centuries of determined continuation in the face of official indifference, and supported grimly at times by the local communities, the strength the Syrian deities had exhibited in their spread throughout the empire is not surprising, and the adaptability of these religions from Syria to the conditions in the rest of the empire seems quite remarkable. Hadad, Dolichenus, and Baal developed into Zeus and then into Jupiter with scarcely a break, and then spread from Syria as far as Hadrian's Wall; *Dea Syra*/Atargatis had already reached Greece and Sicily, probably in the wake of the export of Syrian slaves in the Hellenistic period, but in Greece she had transformed herself into a facsimile of Aphrodite so successfully that the Greeks confused the two, a remarkable fact considering the profound Greekness of Aphrodite. The baal of the Bekaa Valley transformed himself into Jupiter of Heliopolis and was carried by the Latin-speaking legions and Phoenician merchants to Italy and other Latin areas, but scarcely at all to areas where Greek was the common language – and this despite the fact that, as its name indicates, the baal was housed in a Greek city. And all the time the Jews carried their reworked version of Judaism with them as they spread slowly through the empire, though they had much less success in spreading their religion than most of their competitors, and tended to lose adherents to Christianity, notably in Asia Minor and North Africa; Judaism spread through the empire with the Jews' movements, not by the conversions of Gentiles, which was the method of Dolichenus and Christianity above all.

This adaptability of the Syrian religions to new social, language, and geographical environments also occurred of course with Christianity, beginning with the abandonment of certain Jewish practices seen as obnoxious by Gentiles even as early as the first century AD. By the time it was domesticated in Italy, using the Latin language, adopting the government system of the Roman Empire, and eventually, of course, seizing that government, it was no longer a Syrian religion but, as it turned out, in one version an African ('Donatist'), in another a Latin, in another an Egyptian ('Coptic'), as well as remaining a Syrian religion at home ('Monophysite'). This used to be regarded as the emergence of nationalistic versions of Christianity, a concept now largely abandoned; nevertheless Christianity was seen to be fragmented as soon as governmental pressure changed from enmity to acceptance. It was thus a reflection of some of the fundamental language divisions – Punic, Greek, Latin, Aramaic, even perhaps Celtic – and so the social divisions, which persisted in the empire throughout its history, passed into Christianity, notably in its governmental structure, adapted from the Roman imperial system.

It follows that one of the major factors in Syrian participation in the empire was in the personal influence of Syrian religions, and the soldiers and merchants from that country. It was their ability to adapt themselves to different social environments in the rest of the empire outside Syria which carried most effect. It is, of course, by the very nature of the evidence, impossible to be precise in estimating the degree of such influence, but the movement of Syrians to almost all parts of the empire, and the vigour of Syrian society at home at the same time, certainly had its effect. Pioneered by the transfer of Syrian soldiers throughout

the empire during the first century AD, Syrian religions soon followed. Non-Syrians throughout the empire would have developed a general familiarity with the Syrians who moved into their lands by these movements. This may be said to have prepared the ground for the triumph of Christianity, while at the same time requiring this new religion to break up into the separate regional variations, which were largely based on the local languages in use in the empire. (Apart from the concentration of *Dea Syra* worship in Greece, this separation does not seem to have occurred in the other Syrian religions.) The ubiquity of Syrians in the empire was therefore the preliminary, and possibly the essential preliminary, to the ubiquity of Christianity. By spreading Syrians through all parts of the empire the imperial government was contributing, probably unknowingly and unintentionally, to the integration of the empire, and eventually it was Christianity which held it together after the divisions of the third century. And it was Christianity which survived the fall of the empire, so one may say that it was Syrian influences in the Roman Empire which set the scene for the religious history of the Mediterranean and Europe over the next millennia.

Bibliography

Alston, R., *Soldiers and Society in Roman Egypt, a Social History*, London 1995.

Andrade, N. D., *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, Cambridge 2013.

Applebaum, S., *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene*, Leiden 1979.

Applebaum, S., *Prolegomena to the Study of the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132–135)*, BAR S 7, Oxford 1976.

Astarita, M. L., *C. Avidio Cassio*, Roma 1983.

Aubet, M. E., *The Phoenicians and the West, Politics, Colonies and Trade*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 2001.

Bagnall, R. S., *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Princeton, NJ 1993.

Baldus, H. R., *Uranius Antoninus*, Bonn 1971.

Ball, W., *Rome in the East, the Transformation of an Empire*, London 2000.

Balla, L., 'Les Syriens et le Chute de Jupiter Dolichenus dans le Region du Danube', *Acta Classica Universita Scientiarum Debrecen* 12, 1976, 61–68.

Balty, J.-Ch., 'Apamaea in Syria in the Second and Third Centuries AD', *JRS* 78, 1988, 97–104.

Balty, J.-Ch. and Balty, J.-C., 'Apamee de Syrie, archeologie et histoire I, Des origines a la Tetrarchie', *ANRW* II 8, 1977, 103–134.

Banea, D., 'Integrarea Culturala a Palmyrenilor in Dacia Romana', *Apulum* 39, 2002, 185–199.

Baradez, J., *Fossatum Africae*, Paris 1949.

Barclay, G., *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, Berkeley, CA 1995.

Barnes, T. D., 'Trajan and the Jews', *JJS* 40, 1989, 145–162.

Baslez, M.-F., 'La famille de Philopappus de Commagene, un Prince entre deux mondes', *DHA* 18, 1992, 89–101.

Beard, M., North, J., and Price, S. *Religions of Rome*, Cambridge 1998.

Belayche, N., '"Dea Syriae Sacrum", la romanite des cults "orientaux"', *Revue historique* 302, 2010, 565–592.

Benaissa, A., 'A Syrian Slave Girl Twice Sold in Egypt', *ZPE* 173, 2010, 175–190.

Bennett, J., *Trajan, Optimus Princeps*, London 1997.

Berg, L.-P., *Corpus Cultus Deae Syriae*, Leiden 1972.

Bernard, A., *Les ports du desert, Receuil des inscriptions grecques d'Antinooupolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Apollonopolis Parva et Apollonopolis Magna*, Paris 1884.

Bilde, P., 'Atargatis/Dea Syria: Hellenisation of her Cult in the Hellenistic-Roman Period?', in P. Bilde (ed.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Aarhus 1990, 151–187.

Birley, A. R., *The Fasti of Roman Britain*, Oxford 1981.

Birley, A. R., *Hadrian, the Restless Emperor*, London 1997.

Birley, A. R., *Marcus Aurelius*, London 1961.

Birley, A. R., *Septimius Severus, the African Emperor*, 2nd ed., London 1988.

Birley, A. and Birley, A., 'A New Dolichenum Inside the Third Century Fort at Vindolanda', in M. Blomer and A. Walter (eds.), *Iuppiter Dolichenus*, Tubingen 2012, 231–257.
Bowers, W. P., 'Jewish Communities in Spain in the Time of Paul the Apostle', *JTS* NS 26, 1975, 395–402.
Bowersock, G., *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge, MA 1985.
Bowman, A. K., *Egypt after the Pharaohs*, London 1986.
Braund, D. H., 'Juvenal and the East, Satire as an Historical Source', in D. H. French and C. S. Lightfoot (eds.), *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire*, BAR S 553, Oxford 1989, 45–52.
Bricoult, L., 'Les Dieux de l'Orient en Afrique Romaine', *Pallas* 68, 2005, 289–307.
Bridel, P. and Stucky, R. A., 'Tell el-Hajj, place forte du limes de l'Euphrate', in J. D. Margueron (ed.), *Le Moyen Euphrate: Zone de contacte et d'echanges*, London 1977, 349–353.
Brown, P., *The World of Late Antiquity*, London 1971.
Bunnens, G., 'The Storm God in Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia from Hadad of Aleppo to Jupiter Dolichenus', in M. Hutter and S. Hutter-Braunsar (eds.), *Offizielle Religion, locale Kulte und individualle Religionitat*, AOAT 318, 2004, 57–81.
Burns, R., *Monuments of Syria: An Historical Guide*, London 1999.
Butcher, K., *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London 2003.
Chadwick, H., *The Early Church*, London 1967.
Chapot, V., 'Seleucie de Pierie', *Memoires de la Societe Nationale des Antiquities* 66, 1907, 149–266.
Chaumont, M.-L., 'L'Armenie entre Rome et Iran: I de l'avenement d'Auguste a l'avenement de Diocletien', *ANRW* II, 1978, 9.1, 71–194.
Cizek, E., *L'Empereur Aurelien et son Temps*, Paris 1994.
Cohen, G. M., *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and North Africa*, Berkeley, CA 2006.
Collar, A., *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 2013.
College, M.A.R., *The Art of Palmyra*, London 1976.
Cowley, A. F., *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century* BC, London 1923.
Curchin, L. A., *Roman Spain, Conquest and Assimilation*, London 1991.
Dabrowa, E., *Legio X Fretensis, a Prosopographical Study of the Officers (I – III c.* A.D.*)*, Historia Einzelschriften 66, Stuttgart 1993, 32–33.
Debevoise, H. C., *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago 1938.
Delattre, A. L., *Gamart, ou le necropole juive de Carthage*, Lyon 1898.
Devijver, H., 'Equestrian Officers from the East', in P. Freeman and D. Kennedy (eds.), *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, BAR S 297, Oxford 1986, 109–225.
Dodgeon, M. H. and Lieu, S.N.C., *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars,* A.D. *226–263, a Documentary History*, London 1991.
Downey, G., *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton, NJ 1961.
Drijvers, H. J. W., *The Religion of Palmyra*, Leiden 1976.
Ehrenberg, V. and Jones, A.H.M. (eds.), *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1955.
Farnum, J. A., *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions*, BAR S 1458, Oxford 2005.
Feldman, L. H., *Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World*, Princeton, NJ 1993.
Fentress, E.W.B., *Numidia and the Roman Army*, BAR S 53, Oxford 1979.
Fink, R. O., *Roman Military Records on Papyrus*, American Philological Association Monograph 26, Cleveland 1971.
Fishwick, D., 'The Development of Provincial Ruler-Worship in the Western Roman Empire', *ANRW* II 16.2, 1978, 1201–1253.
Fitz, J., *Les Syriens a Intercisa*, Coll. Latomus, 1972.

Frend, W.H.C., *The Early Church*, 2nd ed., London 1982.
Frye, N. N., 'Assyria and Syria: Synonyms', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51, 1992, 281–285.
Fuks, A., 'Aspects of the Jewish Revolt in A.D. 115–117', *JRS* 51, 1961, 98–108.
Gadd, C., *Les Dynastes d'Emese*, Beirut 1972.
Garcia y Bellido, A., *Les Religions Orientales dans l'Espagne Romaine*, Leiden 1967.
Gatier, P. L., 'Monuments du culte "Dolichenus" en Cyrrhestique', *Syria* 75, 1998, 161–169.
Gatier, P.-L., 'Une Inscription latine du moyen Euphrate', *Syria* 51, 1994, 151–157.
Gibson, E. L., 'Jews in the Inscriptions of Smyrna', *JJS* 66, 2005, 66–79.
Gillam, J. F., 'The *dux ripae* at Dura', *TAPA* 72, 1941.
Goodhue, N., *The Lucus Furrinae and the Syrian Sanctuary on the Janiculum*, Amsterdam 1975.
Goodman, M., 'Jewish Proselytising in the First Century', in J. Lieu, J. North, and T. Rayak (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, London 1992.
Goodman, M., *Mission and Conversion*, Oxford 1994.
Goossens, G., *Hierapolis de Syrie*, Louvain 1943.
Grainger, J. D., *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, Oxford 1990.
Grainger, J. D., *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, Oxford 1991.
Grainger, J. D., *Nerva and the Roman Succession Crisis of AD 96–98*, London 2003.
Grainger, J. D., *Roman Conquests, Egypt and Judaea*, Barnsley 2013.
Grainger, J. D., *Seleukos Nikator*, London 1991.
Grainger, J. D., *Studies in the Inscriptions of Roman Syria*, MA thesis, Birmingham University 1980.
Grainger, J. D., *Syria, an Outline History*, Barnsley 2016.
Gregory, S., *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier*, 3 vols, Amsterdam 1995–1997.
Griggs, C. W., *Early Egyptian Christianity from Its Origins to 451 CE*, Leiden 1990.
Gruen, E. S., *Diaspora, Jews amongst Greeks and Romans*, Cambridge, MA 2002.
Hajjar, J., *Le Triade d'Heliopolis-Baalbek*, Leiden 1977.
Haley, E. W., *Baetica Felix*, Austin, TX 2003.
Hall, A. S., 'The XII Fulminata, Countermarks, Emblems, and Movements under Trajan or Hadrian', in S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia*, BAR 156, Oxford 1983, 41–46.
Harden, D., *The Phoenicians*, London 1963.
Hayward, R., 'The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis: A Reconsideration', *JJS* 33, 1982, 429–433.
Hilali, A., 'La Mentalite religieux des Soldats de l'Armee Romaine d'Afrique: l'exemple des dieux Syriens et Palmyreniennes', in Lukas de Blois, Peter Funke, and Johannes Haber (ed.), *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions*, Leiden 2006, 150–162.
Hirschberg, H. Z., *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, 2nd rev. ed., Leiden 1974.
Hodgson, N. (comp.), *Hadrian's Wall, 1999–2009*, Kendall 2009.
Holbl, G., *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, London 2001.
Hopkins, K., 'Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire, 200 BC–A.D. 400', *Journal of Roman Studies* 70, 1980, 101–125.
Horbury, W., 'The Jewish Revolts under Trajan and Hadrian', *CHJ* 4, Cambridge 1998.
Horig, M., '*Dea Syra*-Atargatis', *ANRW* II 17.3, 1984.
Icks, M., *The Crimes of Elagabalus*, London 2013.
Iglesias, L. G., *Los Judios en la Espana antigua*, Madrid 1978.
Inchbald, G., *Camels and Others*, London 1968.
Isaac, N., *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, rev. ed., Oxford 1992.
Jarrett, M. G., 'An Album of Equestrians from North Africa in the Emperor's Service', *Epigraphica Studia* 9, 1972.
Jones, A.H.M., *Augustus*, London 1970.
Jones, A.H.M., *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1971.

Karttunen, K., *India in the Hellenistic World*, Helsinki 1997.

Keay, S. J., *Roman Spain*, London 1988.

Kennedy, D. (ed.), *The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*, Portsmouth, RI 1998.

Kennedy, D. L., 'Parthian Regiments in the Roman Army', *11th Limes Congress* 1977, 521–531.

Keppie, L.J.F., 'Legions of the East from Augustus to Trajan', in Philip Freeman and David Kennedy (eds.), *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, BAR S 297, Oxford 1986, 411–429.

Lambrechts, P. and Noyen, P., 'Recherches sur le culte d'Atargatis dans le monde Grecque', *Le Nouvelle Clio* 6, 1954.

Le Bohec, Y., *La Troisieme Legion Auguste*, Paris 1989.

Le Bohec, Y. (ed.), *Les Legions de Roman sous le Haut Empire*, Lyon 2000.

Le Bohec, Y. 'Les Syrians dans l'Afrique Romaine: civils ou militaire?', *Carthage* 21, 1982, 81–92.

Lesquier, L. J., *L'armee Romaine de l'Egypte de Auguste a Diocletian*, Cairo 1918.

Levick, B., *Julia Domna, Syrian Empress*, London 2007.

Lewis, N., *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt*, Oxford 1986.

Lewis, N. N., *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800–1980*, Cambridge 1987.

Lieu, J., North, J., and Rayak, T., *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, London 1992.

Luderitz, G., *Corpus Judens der Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika*, Wiesbaden 1983.

MacMullen, R., *Christianising the Roman Empire*, New Haven, CN 1984.

Mann, J. C., *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate*, edited by M. M. Roxan, London 1983.

Marfoe, L., *Kamid el-Loz*, vol. 14, *Settlement History of the Biqa up to the Iron Age*, Bonn 1998.

Margueron, J. D. (ed.), *Le Moyen Euphrate: Zone de contacte et d'echanges*, London 1977.

Maricq, A. (ed. and trans.), 'Res Gestae Divi Saporis', *Syria* 35, 1958, 245–260.

Maxfield, V., 'The Deployment of the Roman auxilia in Upper Egypt and the Eastern Desert during the Principate', in G. Alfoldy (ed.), *Kaiser, Heer und Gesellschaft in der Romische Kaiserzeit*, Stuttgart 2000, 407–442.

Miles, R., *Carthage must be Destroyed, the Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilisation*, London 2010.

Millar, F., *The Roman Near East, 31* BC*–A.D. 337*, Cambridge, MA 1993.

Mirkovic, M., 'L. Marius Perpetuus, Consularis', *Ziva Antika* 27, 1977, 443–448.

Mocsy, A., *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London 1974.

Moore, C. H., 'The Distribution of Oriental Cults in the Gauls and the Germanies', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 38, 1907, 109–150.

Moorey, P.R.S., *Cemeteries of the First Millennium* BC *at Deve Huyuk Near Carchemish Salvaged by T.E. Lawrence and C.L. Woolley in 1913*, BAR S 87, Oxford 1980.

Moorey, P.R.S., 'Iranian Troops at Deve Huyuk in Syria in the Earlier Fifth Century BC', *Levant* 7, 1975, 108–117.

Mouterde, R. and Poidebard, A., *Le limes de Chalcis*, Paris 1945.

Myers, E. A., *The Ituraeans and the Roman Near East, Reassessing the Sources*, Cambridge 2010.

Noy, D, Panayotis, A, and Bloedhem, H., *Incriptiones Judaicae Orientis*, I, *Eastern Europe*, Tubingen 2004.

Oded, B., *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Wiesbaden 1979.

Oliver, H. J., 'Relatives of Aemilius Iuncus', *Hesperia* 36, 1967.

Olmstead, A. J., *A History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago 1948.

Parker, P., *The Empire Stops Here: A Journey along the Frontier of the Roman World*, London 2009.

Parker, S. T., *Romans and Saracens, a History of the Arabian Frontier*, American Philological Association, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1986.

Pflaum, H.-G., 'Un nouveau diplome militaire d'un soldat de l'armee d'Egypte', *Syria* 44, 1967, 339–362.

Picard, G.-Ch., *Castellum Dimmidi*, 1947.

Piso, I. and Banea, D., 'Epigraphica Tibiscensia', *Acta MN* 36, 1995, 91–109.

Poidebard, A., *Le Trace de Rome dans le desert de Syrie*, Paris 1934.

Pollard, N., *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor, MI 2000.

Pollard, N. and Berry, J., *The Complete Roman Legions*, London 2011.

Potter, D. S., *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, Oxford 1990.

Potter, D. S., *The Roman Empire at Bay AD 180–395*, London 2004.

Pryor, J. H., *Geography, Technology and War, Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649–1571*, Cambridge 1988.

Ragette, F., *Baalbek*, London 1980.

Reynolds, J. and Tannenbaum, R., *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias; Greek Inscriptions with Commentary*, Cambridge 1987.

Robertson, A. S., *The Antonine Wall: A Handbook to the Surviving Remains*, 5th ed., rev. by L. Keppie, Glasgow 2001.

Rostovtzeff, M. M., *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols, 2nd ed., Oxford 1957.

Roxan, M. M., 'The Auxilia of Mauretania Tingitana', *Latomus* 32, 1973, 835–855.

Saglan, S., 'Karaman Musezi'nde Bulunar Bir grup Muhir Baskisi', *Anadolu/Anatolia* 34, 2008, 77–96.

Sartre, M., *The Middle East under Rome*, Cambridge, MA 2005.

Schlumberger, D., *Le Palmyrene du nord-ouest*, Paris 1951.

Schneider, E. E., 'Palmireni in Africa: Calceus Heruclis', in Attilio Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa Romana 5*, Sassari, Sardinia 1988, 383–395.

Schoenberger, H., 'The Roman Frontier in Germany: An Archaeological Survey', *JRS* 59, 1969, 144–197.

Schurer, E., *The History of the Jewish People in the age of Jesus Christ*, revised and edited by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, 3 vols, Edinburgh 1973–1984.

Seyrig, H., 'Bel de Palmyre', *Syria* 48, 1971, 85–114.

Seyrig, H., 'La cimitiere des marins a Seleucie de Pierie', in *Melanges Syriens Offerts a M. Rene Dussaud*, Paris 1939, 451–459.

Seyrig, H., 'Le monnayage de Hierapolis de Syria a l'epoque d'Alexandre', *Revue Numismatique*, 11, 1971, 11–21.

Seyrig, H., 'L'Incorporation de Palmyre a l'empire romain', *Syria* 13, 1932, 266–277.

Shaw, B. D. 'The Passion of Perpetua', *Past and Present* 139, 1993, 3–45.

Sidebotham, S. E., *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route*, California 2011.

Smallwood, E. M., *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian*, Cambridge 1966.

Smallwood, E. M., *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976.

Solin, H., 'Juden und Syrer in der Romischen Welt', *ANRW* II 8, 587–789.

Southern, P., 'The *numeri* of the Roman Imperial Army', *Britannia* 20, 1989, 81–140.

Speidel, M. A., 'Legio IIII *Scythica*, Its Movements and Men', in D. Kennedy (ed.), *The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*, Portsmouth, RI 1998, 163–203.

Speidel, M. A., 'Legio IV *Scythica*', in L. Bohec (ed.), *Les legions de Rome*, Paris 2000, 309–315.

Speidel, M. A., 'The Roman Army in Judaea Under the Procurators', *Ancient Society* 13/14, 1982/1983, 233–240.

Speidel, M. P., *Emperor Hadrian's Speeches to the African Army: A New Text*, Mainz 2006.
Speidel, M. P., 'The Road to Viminacium', *Asloski Vestnick* 335, 1985, 339–341.
Speidel, M. P., 'A Thousand Thracian Recruits for Mauretania Tingitana', *Antiquites Africaines* 11, 1977, 167–173.
Spiedel, M. P., *The Worship of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Roman Army*, Leiden 1978.
Starr, C. G., *The Roman Imperial Navy, 31 BC–A.D. 324*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1960.
Stevenson, J. (ed.), *A New Eusebius, Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*, London 1960.
Stoll, O., 'The Religions of the Armies', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Oxford 2007, 451–476.
Sullivan, R. D., 'The Dynasty of Commagene', *ANRW* II 8, 1977, 732–798.
Sullivan, R. D., 'The Dynasty of Emesa', *ANRW* 8.2, 1977, 198–218.
Sullivan, R. D., *Near Eastern Royalty and Rome, 100–30 BC*, Toronto 1990.
Syme, R., 'Avidius Cassius, His Rank, Age, and Quality', in *Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium, 1984–1985*, Bonn 1987, 207–222.
Syme, R., 'Fiction about Roman Jurists', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung fur Rechtsgeschichte* 97, 1980, 78–104.
Syme, R., *Tacitus*, Oxford 1954.
Talbert, R.J.A., *The Senate of Imperial Rome*, Princeton, NJ 1984.
Tchalenko, G., *Villes Antique de la Syrie du Nord: Le Massif Belus a l'epoque romain*, 3 vols, Paris 1953–1958.
Teixidor, J., *The Pagan God*, Princeton, NJ 1977.
Teixidor, J., *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, Leiden 1979.
Thapar, R., *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, rev. ed., New Delhi 1997.
Thomas, C., *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*, London 1981.
Thompson, D. J., *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, 2nd ed., Princeton, NJ 2012.
Tihn, T. T., *Le Culte des Divinites Orientales en Campanie*, Leiden 1972.
Tolh, I., 'Destruction of the Sanctuaries of Iuppiter Dolichenus at the Rhine and in the Danube Region (235–238)', *AAASH* 25, 1973, 109–116.
Tomlin, R.S.O., 'Inscriptions', *Britannia* 39, 2008, 381–384.
Trebilco, P. R., *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, Cambridge 1991.
Trombley, F. R., *Hellenic Religion and Christianisation, c.370–529*, 2 vols, 2nd ed., Leiden 1995.
Tudor, D., 'Les Syriens en Dacie Inferieure', *AAAS* 21, 1971, 71–76.
Uberti, M. L., 'Glass', in S. Moscati (ed.), *The Phoenicians*, London 2001, 536–561.
Vaggi, G., 'Siria e Siri nei documenti dell'Egitto greco-romani', *Aegyptus* 17, 1937, 29–51.
van Berchem, D., 'Le Port de Seleucie de Pierie et l'infrastructure logistique des guerres Partique', *Bonner Jahrbucher* 185, 1985, 47–87.
van der Meer, F. and Mohrmann, C., *Atlas of the Early Christian Church*, 2nd ed., London 1966.
Vollmer, F., *Inscriptiones Bavariae Romanae*, Munich 1915.
von Elbe, J., *Roman Germany*, 2nd ed., Mainz 1977.
Wagner, J., 'Neue denkwaler aus Doliche', *Bonner Jahrbucher* 182, 1982, 133–166.
Weiss, P. and Speidel, M. P., 'Der erste Militardiplome fur Arabia', *ZPE* 150, 2004.
Will, E., 'Pline l'ancien et Palmyre: un problem d'histoire ou d'histoire internal?', *Syria* 62, 1985, 263–270.
Williams, H., *Christianity in Early Britain*, Oxford 1912.
Williams, S., *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*, London 1985.
Zappata, E., 'Les divinites dolicheniennes et les sources epigraphiques latines', in G. M. Bellilli and U. Bianchi (eds.), *Orientalia Sacra Urbis Romae, Dolichena et Heliopolitana*, Roma 1996, 87–255.

Index